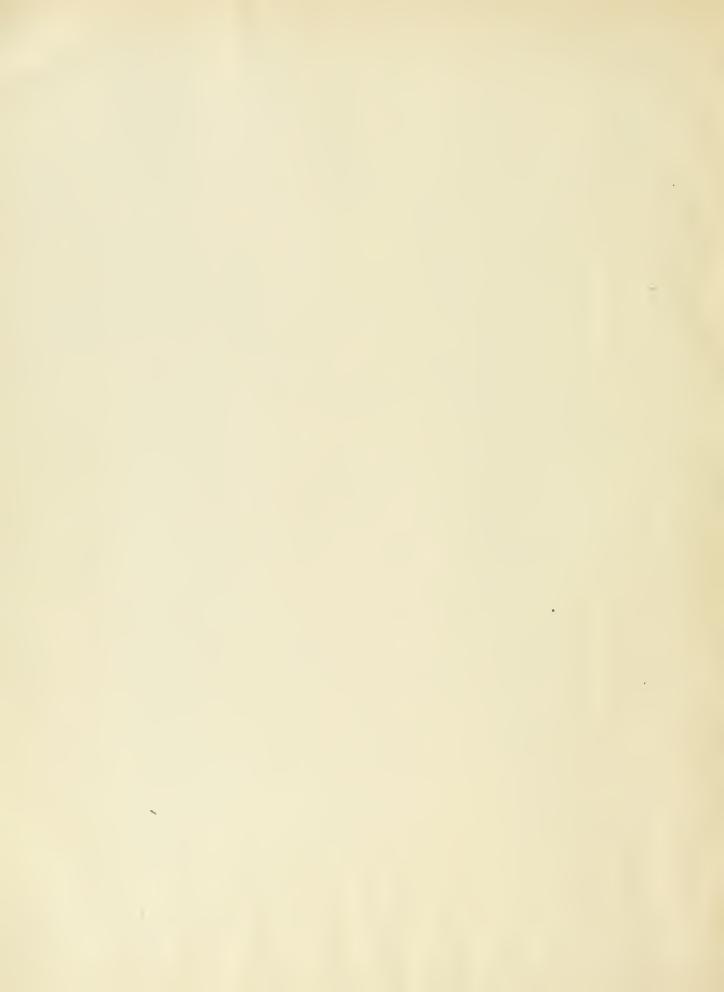




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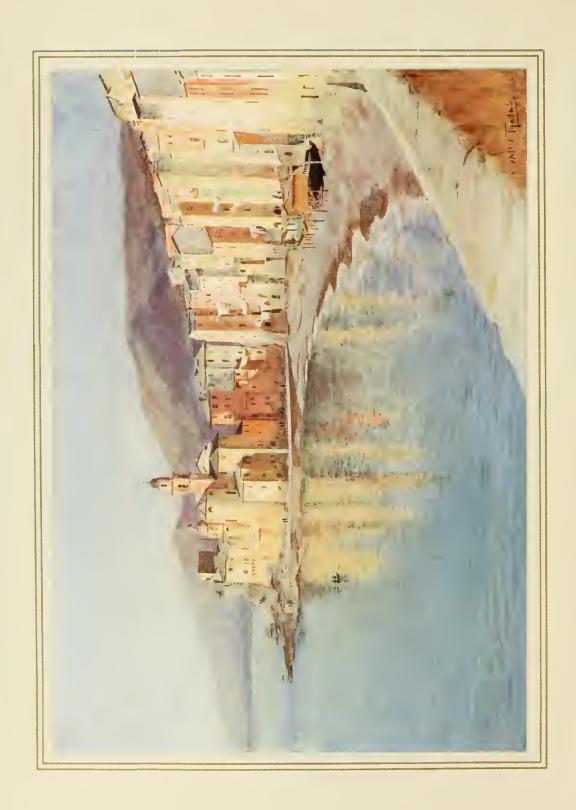








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## An Artist In the

## RIVIERA

Written and painted By

WALTER TYNDALE, R.I.

'Amor mi mosse Che mi fa parlare'



HEARST'S INTERNATIONAL LIBRARY CO.

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## PREFACE

The reader may miss, in the following pages, both illustrations and mention of places often associated with the Riviera, although, strictly speaking, they do not come within its limits. "La Riviera" is the Italian name specially given to the sea littoral between the Gulf of Spezia and the mouth of the Var. West of that river is known in France as "La Côte d'Azur." To have included the well-known places lying between Nice and Marseilles would have added to the bulk of this volume, and may be left to a future one, should a desire for it be expressed. But apart from this consideration, I felt more attracted to the Italian than to the French side of this favoured coast. Nature has been as lavish in her gifts to the one as to the other; but in man's attempts to subdue Nature to his present requirements "La Côte d'Azur" has lost more of its charm than the less sophisticated Italian Riviera.

Whether even this one volume supplies a want I will not attempt to prove, judging that my publishers know more than I do what the public does want. My concern, as a painter, is that it wants so few pictures, and is so easily satisfied with cheap reproductions. "Then why not give us more reproductions and say less about them?" the critic may ask, should he be unaware that reproduction, by any colour process, is still much more costly than words. And if excuse be wanting for so many words, I will again quote Dante's lines on my title page:

"Amor mi mosse Che mi fa parlare."

"For of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" is as good an English rendering as I can find. It is, however, poor fun speaking unless one secures a listener; and, should I be fortunate enough to find one, I will first speak of the "Riviera di Levante"—that portion east of Genoa; and if he or she will follow me so far, I will devote the second part of this book to "La Riviera di Ponente."



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# PART I LA RIVIERA DI LEVANTE



#### CHAPTER I

"GENOVA LA SUPERBA"

"Genoa was a bank before it was a city."

Michelet.

foreigner, intent on wintering in either the Eastern or Western Rivieras, breaks his journey. If it be his first visit to Italy, and the weather propitious, Genoa will in all probability far exceed his expectations. But should he arrive there in bad weather, he will in all likelihood seek shelter at Nervi and set down "La Superba" as a detestable hole. To a great extent our first impressions of any city depend on the weather in which we see it; but it is markedly so here, for Genoa can be very beautiful when she smiles, and can be very unpleasant when she frowns. I have known her in every mood, and it is hard to believe that the various impressions I have taken away are all of one and the same place.

Genoa was looking her best when I broke my

journey there last December. The sun was warm enough to make a top-coat superfluous, the air was crisp and exhilarating, although there was hardly enough wind to ruffle the surface of the Mediterranean. The intense blue of the waters, shot with streaks of emerald, had the iridescence of a peacock's neck. The light seemed to dazzle on the buildings more than its wont, and the shadows appeared more violet than ever. In the old town nothing was changed since my former visit, and yet the houses seemed taller and the streets narrower; and surely there was a greater abundance of linen hung out wherever a ray of sun could catch it. The solution probably lay in my having spent the six previous months in a studio in England, whereas on a former visit I had come from the flaming East.

The sights of Genoa are adequately enough described in every guide-book. I had "done" all the palaces years ago, and chiefly remember the depression caused by their monotonous gorgeousness. We visit the palaces and galleries in other Italian cities chiefly to study the art which those cities produced; but what art has Genoa ever produced? There are certainly fine pictures in several of these palaces, but the best of them are not the work of Genoese artists. The buildings that house them are impressive in their way, and that is owing to their being designed by architects from other Italian states.

I have generally noticed a blank look on the face of most people on their being told of another palace which

#### "GENOVA LA SUPERBA"

they had escaped seeing; and the reason of this is, I take it, that these palaces, presumably built as dwelling places, have so little in them suggestive of a home. Little wonder it is that many of them are uninhabited or are only used as places of entertainment on special occasions.

After the tourist has been thoroughly depressed by a long course of palaces, to cheer him up he is usually trotted off to the Campo Santo, the public cemetery, and the extraordinary thing is to hear him enthuse about the beauties of the monuments. Now of all the execrable art the "monumental artist" has produced during the last two centuries, nothing can touch the horrible things seen here. Young sculptors should be sent here to study everything that a sculptor should avoid. It would hardly be worth alluding to these monstrosities were they only admired by the casual But what is one to say, when one finds, as follows, in a work of some literary pretensions: "Perhaps the most remarkable sight of Genoa is the Campo Santo, or public cemetery, situated about a mile and a half out of the city on the western slope of the Bisagno Valley. It bears witness not only to the wealth, but also to the artistic taste and refinement of the people. Nowhere else, except in the region where marble was so abundant and accessible, and where a high level of artistic taste has been attained even by common workmen, could such a wonderful enclosure have been constructed." Further on the writer goes into more

detail concerning "the artistic taste and refinement of the people." "In the inner arcade, where the wealthiest and most eminent families of the city are laid, there is a succession of magnificent mausoleums, costing, in some cases, no less than  $f_{1,500}$ . Each family has a whole vault to itself, and the sculptured contents, consisting of mural monuments in high relief, and of single statues and groups of figures, all carved in pure white marble, display a wonderful fertility of invention and marvellous grace and freedom of execution. representations of human sorrow are exceedingly realistic. Here a female figure is sitting up in bed with an eager fascinated look grasping the arm of another figure clothed in a long loose robe, and pointing upwards with extended arm. There another female form is borne to Heaven by an angel resting on clouds. Yonder a mother with a babe on each arm, and a widow mourning over her husband's death-bed, and wiping with a handkerchief the tears that are trickling down her cheeks. Each group and single figure is worthy of a special study." The writer, namely, Dr. Hugh Macmillan, who gives us a very interesting book on the Riviera, possibly felt that as an art critic he was on doubtful ground, for he suggests that "perhaps it might be said that the sculpture is too life-like and does not sufficiently idealize the varied representations of human distress."

Shortly after seeing these ghastly representations I found myself in Pisa, and I hesitated before entering

#### "GENOVA LA SUPERBA"

the beautiful Campo Santo there, fearing lest some of the "artistic taste" of the latter-day Genoese might have crept in. Happily this is not the case, and the wonderful frescoes soon dispelled the unpleasant taste left by its Genoese namesake.

If Genoa has produced few artists it has not failed to produce good engineers. The via di Circonvallazione a Monte is a wondrous bit of construction. In long windings it skirts the hillside through the modern part of the city, and by gentle gradients it reaches to the Spianata Castelletto. I do not usually spend much time in the modern parts of any Italian city, but on a day such as the one I hit on last December, everything was glorified by the beauty of the sunlight. At every curve in the tram-line the extending horizon brought some fresh reaches of the coast into view, and on arriving at the Castelletto it was well worth leaving the car to admire the panorama, and continuing by the following one the windings down to the eastern part of the town.

The modern Italian towns and the newly-built parts of the ancient ones are certainly well planned and the roads well engineered, but they lack interest from want of local character. The situation of Genoa necessitates the modern quarters being somewhat different from those of the cities in the plains, but it is little more than the accident of the lay of the land. Whereas the old towns all have a general Italian character, they retain, nevertheless, many characteristics peculiar to themselves. The old parts of Genoa are distinctly Genoese. A bit

taken from these would look strange if stuck in any other town; but who would know the difference if a modern bit of Florence were tacked on to a modern part of Rome, Milan, or anywhere else in Italy?

It is well worth going to the Spianata Castelletto to see the view from it, but certainly not to see the place itself. The want of views is not felt in the old quarters, for these are quite interesting enough in themselves. To appreciate them properly we should go there in summer, and this applies to most old southern towns, built, as they are, more to ward off the heat than to keep out the cold. The narrow streets keep moderately cool in midsummer, while the broad thoroughfares and spacious piazzas are unbearably hot.

Besides the physical discomfort of sketching during the cold weather, these narrow lanes are then much less pictorial. During the long days a stray ray of sun may find its way through the clothes hanging out to dry and give a fine luminous shadow beneath the projecting eaves and, trickling down a side of the tall houses, cast warm reflections into the opposing shades. The people also look more picturesque, their limbs are less hid by a superabundance of clothes, and the little children will play about half-naked. Men and women will ply their trades in the open doorways or on the pavement, and all the picturesque incidents of everyday life may be seen and studied in any of these streets.

Warm as the sun was on that December morning, everyone moved quickly through the narrow lanes, and

#### "GENOVA LA SUPERBA"

only loitered when they reached the sunny side of the little piazzas dotted about the old town. Of the latter the most picturesque is the Piazza Banchi—and how truly Genoese! the church at one end is called St. Peter of the Banks, the Exchange faces it and money-changers cluster round it. Its entrance is reached by a double flight of steps as high as the shops on which the church stands. The purist will find much to criticize in its architecture, but all must admit that it is picturesque.

At a short distance, in the direction of the harbour, stands the Banco di S. Giorgio. We will quote again Dr. Hugh Macmillan, who is on safer ground here than as a critic of sculpture: "Perhaps the most interesting relic of the old town is the hoary Gothic building, begrimed with dirt, of the Compera, or famous bank of St. George, near the harbour. It is said that the stones of which it is composed were brought from a monastery near Constantinople in 1260. This was the oldest banking and trading house in Europe. Here originated those ideas of developing capital, finding money and charging interest which have developed into the wonderful complications of modern commerce and finance. This bank was the source of Genoa's commercial greatness; indeed, to use Michelet's phrase, 'Genoa was a bank before it was a city.' Like our own East India Company, only that its sphere was at home instead of in a distant land, it had a distinct independent government, and was a state within a state.

It governed colonies in the Crimea, in Cyprus, and in Asia Minor; Ventimiglia and other towns of the Riviera were at one time under its direct sovereignty, and floated the white flag of St. George instead of the republican red cross, while in Corsica the arms of the Bank may still be seen carved over the portals of many of the old official houses." The Bank remained a great power in the State until the French Revolution, when its income from public revenues was confiscated. From this it never recovered, and since then the building has been used as a custom house, and now it is little more than a show-place. Twenty-one statues of worthy Genoese citizens, chiefly of the fifteenth century, stand against the walls of the great hall.

"A princely people's awful princes, The grave, severe Genoese of old."

I looked into San Lorenzo not because that cathedral attracts me very much, but to have another look at a subject I had painted there a good many years previously. To my delight the same sacristan was still there, and, in spite of the thousands of foreigners he had shown round since then, he at once recognized me. I remarked that no changes had taken place during those years, to which he answered: "This old Duomo is very like an elephant, which they tell me hardly changes a hair in a hundred years; mine have changed a good deal," he said, showing his white locks, "but yours, signore, have still kept their colour." The last time I had seen

#### "GENOVA LA SUPERBA"

him he suddenly asked me the ages of my three sons, and on my giving them, he ran off to secure the three numbers in the State lottery before the office was closed. I now reminded him of this, and he shook his head; the ages of my boys had brought him no luck. Our chat was pleasanter now than in the old days when the disgusting habit of spitting on the floors was more in vogue. For some while now, a notice has been posted up in every church in Italy, begging the congregation, both out of respect for the House of God as well as for public hygiene, not to spit on the pavement. Most of the old people can't break the habit, but the younger generation is growing out of it.

We will leave Herr Baedeker to give the details of the cathedral while we zigzag through the narrow streets which lead to the small Gothic church of S. Matteo. The chief interest of this church lies in its associations with the Dorias, besides being the resting-place of Andrea, the foremost bearer of the family name. façade is late thirteenth-century, built in alternate layers of black and white marble. There is very little decoration beyond the mouldings on the jambs of the porch and round the pointed arch, and the touch of positive colour of the mosaic above the lintel. as this is, it is exactly the thing wanted. Montorsoli remodelled the interior in 1530, it is possible that the beauty of this porch appealed to him sufficiently to prevent his encasing the whole façade in the style of his period. Inscriptions in honour of different members

of the Doria family are inscribed on every alternate stone on the outward faces of the jambs, and there is another on an ancient sarcophagus, built into the wall beneath the right-hand window. This is in memory of Lamba Doria, who in 1297 defeated the Venetians at Curzola.

Much as one might wish that the interior had not been remodelled out of all relation to the exterior, there is nevertheless a great charm about it, and some of the details are very fine cinque-cento work. Andrea Doria's sword hangs over the high altar—a relic which the custodian can point out without exciting a suspicion that he has his tongue in his cheek. The handsome cloisters, slightly later than the main building, can serve as a genealogical tree of the medieval Dorias, and near the last resting-place of the great admiral are the remains of his statue, by Montorsoli, which was mutilated during the French Revolution.

Nearly every house in the piazza in front of the church belonged to a member of the Doria family. They look small in comparison to the sixteenth-century one built for Andrea, but would, nevertheless, be considered very large houses in London.

We shall hear more of this illustrious family as we proceed from town to town along the Ligurian coast. It is curious how few relics remain of Andrea Doria's great contemporary and fellow citizen, Christopher Columbus; he was only twenty years senior to the admiral, yet, from the few relics of him that we come across, he seems to

#### "GENOVA LA SUPERBA"

belong to a much earlier date. The house of his birth is pointed out, but with doubtful authenticity.

Compared with many other old Italian cities, Genoa has not much to detain an artist unless he treats large panoramic subjects. Picturesque "bits" are comparatively few; it is her position, rising like an amphitheatre above her wide semi-circular harbour, terrace above terrace, till palaces and gardens are lost in the folds of the hills, which justifies her proud title of La Superba.

#### CHAPTER II

S. MARGHERITA, PORTOFINO, AND THE CONVENT
OF S. FRUTTUOSO

TEMEMBERING what some artist friends of mine had told me of S. Margherita, I decided to go I had been given the impression that it was a quite unsophisticated place, mainly inhabited by fisher-folk, with, nevertheless, a quite possible inn to put up at. You may imagine my disappointment when, arriving at the station, I found about twenty hotel omnibuses and hall-porters awaiting the train. Those ponderous titles, seen on every great modern caravansary, met my gaze, not one of which suggested the "quite possible" inn I had heard of. When I asked for the Albergo Centrale, a gold brocaded cap with "Imperial Palace" on it and a man underneath, consulted the cap of the "Royal"; the "Royal" had never heard of it; but as the "Continental" cap was doing its second season, I was referred to its wearer. This one turned round and called out "Kaiserhof," pointing my way with his thumb, and before I could

#### S. MARGHERITA

explain that that was not the hotel I sought, a man in his shirt-sleeves, and no cap whatever on his head, pushed his way through these magnificent creatures, and seized hold of my hand-bag. Not a word of Italian did I hear all this time; I had been addressed in English by the "caps," who amongst themselves spoke German; "shirt-sleeves" spoke little of either, but French like a native. In the latter language I was told that the Albergo Centrale and the Kaiserhof were one and the same place.

A feeling of hatred towards those artist friends who had led me here rankled within me, and I meditated how I could avenge this by luring them to some Imperial Palace Hotel under the pretence that it was a characteristic old Italian inn, formerly the palace of Doge, with a sanded floor and mouldering frescoes on the ceiling. I had hardly planned out this form of revenge, before my cab drew up at the Kaiserhof. I soon discovered that I had not done so badly; the hotel was only pretentious in its name, *i.e.* Imperial Court, for I was very comfortable there and the charges were not on an imperial scale.

S. Margherita in itself is a poor sketching ground; but it has an advantage in its being placed mid-way between two very picturesque places, and these are Portofino and Camogli. Rapallo is only two miles further along the coast; but that once pretty old town is now almost smothered in "Imperial Palace" hotels, kursaals and such like; and what is even worse is the

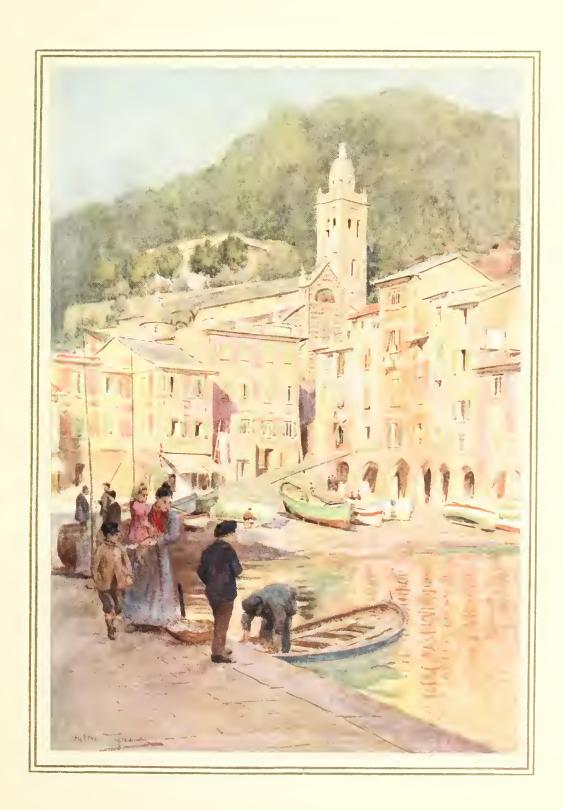
number of villas lately built by the "Americani"—not Americans, as we understand the name, but by Italian emigrants to the Argentine Republic, who, after having made a fortune, return to their native country to spend it. These villas are mostly in execrable taste, and adorned with plenty of sculpture of the Campo Santo order. Some are painted an eye-searing magenta, others a saffron yellow, and when that does not hurt one enough they may try a combination of the two colours with parts picked out in sky-blue. Happily the shrubs and trailing plants grow luxuriantly in this district and hide parts of these houses from the road.

The coast, from Portofino to Chiavari, forming the Gulf of Rapallo (properly called the Tigullian Gulf), is by nature one of the most beautiful parts of the Riviera, a fact which makes these horrible villas all the more One inlet succeeds another, and on every promontory the ruins of an ancient stronghold are seen amidst the dark green of the pines and ilexes. three miles of road from S. Margherita to the eastern face of the promontory of Portofino has been fortunately less spoilt by the "Americani," one or two of the villas near it even adding to its charms. The inlet at Paraggi with its quaint fishing village still retains its character; and the land around it, as well as on the extreme spit of the promontory, has so far been kept unspoilt by Mr. Yeats Brown, an Englishman, who until recently owned nearly the whole of it.

The road takes one or two sharp turnings after



Porto inc





### S. MARGHERITA

leaving Paraggi, and the little town, circling the landlocked harbour of Portofino, comes into view. Its position as a harbour of refuge for small craft is ideal; it is sheltered from the south-west winds by a lofty peninsula, which juts out at the extreme point of the promontory, and it lies snugly tucked in a deep little bay at the isthmus. That the harbour was coveted by many besides its rightful owners is evidenced by the castle overlooking it—a stronghold raised in medieval times to protect the town from the Barbary corsairs. It has not, like most, fallen into ruin, and until lately was occupied by its owner, Mr. Yeats Brown. A villa, beautifully situated on the high ground forming the neck of the peninsula, is owned by the Dowager-Countess of Carnaryon. The town has so far remained unspoilt by exploitation; but compared with other Italian fishing villages there is an unwonted tidiness, suggestive of British influence. A huge hotel with the vile name "Grand Splendide" occupies a fine position some way up the mountain on the main portion of the promontory.

This hotel with the two large English residences have doubtless contributed to the prosperity of the town, and prosperity in this part of Italy generally shows itself in strong colours. I had to wash a good deal of it off in the accompanying illustration to make it passable, and probably more like what the houses were before prosperity broke out in bucketsful of red and green paint.

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While intent on my drawing, I was disturbed by an unusual number of people passing my way as well as by some shouting behind me. I turned round and saw a man rushing down a steep path leading to the quay. He then sprang into a boat alongside, hurriedly loosened the painter and was about to push off when a second man, who had followed in hot pursuit, also jumped into the boat, and a violent struggle took place. second man seized an oar, and made an attempt to beat down the first one who, ducking under the oar, brought his head into his assailant's stomach and toppled him into the water. What struck me as very odd was the attitude of the onlookers, who seemed to take it as an excellent joke; but when I hurried to join them, the mystery was revealed by my seeing a man winding up a cinematograph camera.

Happily Portofino witnesses now few tragic events more stirring than this! Its past history is a series of struggles for the possession of the harbour. Known as Portus Delphinus by the Romans, it was a place of refuge for their galleons on their way to Gaul, and it was doubtless also used in turn by Phænicians, Greeks, and Carthaginians. After the fall of the Roman Empire we hear of its being in possession of the Lombards, of its seizure by the Saracens, next of its being wrested from them by the Genoese and alternately in the hands of Guelf and Ghibelline families. A French fleet under Andrea Doria beat the Spanish, led by Agostino Spinola, and took possession of the port, and, with faction fights

#### S. MARGHERITA

to fill up the intervals till Napoleonic times, the harbour has been disputed by French, Spaniards, English and Austrians. What with these vicissitudes added to periodical earthquakes, famine and plague, is it not a wonder that any of the old Ligurian stock should still subsist?

History tells us that Richard Cœur de Lion took refuge here when he sailed to the Holy Land. Dante's "Alto Arrigo," the ill-fated Henry VII., must have used this harbour when in the Pisan and Genoese galleys he bore the Tuscan exiles back to their province. Whether Napoleon was actually here I cannot tell; but he must have been impressed with the importance of the position, for when the whole of Liguria fell into his hands, he had the place renamed "Port Napoleon." After the fall of that monarch the erstwhile Genoese Republic was annexed to the kingdom of Sardinia, and Port Napoleon became once more Portofino.

Much as I was attracted to Portofino, there was yet another place just round the corner, which I had only seen on some picture post-cards and which attracted me still more. To get there by land meant the best part of a day's excursion by a drive to Portofino Kulm, followed by a break-neck climb down a mountain path to the sea. This romantic and inaccessible spot is S. Fruttuoso.

The sea was calm enough to reflect the Portofino houses corkscrew fashion in the harbour; but it was much too rough to venture round the peninsula in an

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open boat. There may have been only slight danger of capsizing, and a bribe might have tempted a boatman to row me round the point, but I know the danger of seasickness too well to care to venture out. The old monastery of S. Fruttuoso must wait till a smooth sea should make the trip to it more comfortable.

A useful guide to Rapallo and its neighbourhood by someone signing himself "P. I. A." tells us that: "The once celebrated monastery of S. Fruttuoso, martyr, was the cradle of progress and learning for all the neighbouring district, and extended a despotic though beneficent influence far and wide." It goes on to say: "After rounding the Capo di Monte and following the rocky coast, one suddenly comes on the little village hidden in the heart of a small bay, with the old monastery and church rising from the waters and supported on arches. Through these the mourning barges used to sweep in old times as they bore the remains of some brave Doria from Genoa to his final resting-place in the black-and-white tombs which are washed by the waters on which these heroes gained their laurels."

The above, as well as a vivid description of someone else who had been there, increased my impatience for a calm day. This impatience was shared by an enthusiastic and talented young German artist who also put up at my S. Margherita hotel, and we both decided to stay at the little *osteria* in the hamlet, however primitive the accommodation might be. An advertisement that a little steamer would run (weather permitting) from

#### S. MARGHERITA

Rapallo, touch at S. Margherita and Portofino, and go on to S. Fruttuoso, returning after a couple of hours' stay, gave us our chance. But as many places which are interesting to read about, and look tempting in a photograph, do not always lend themselves to pictorial treatment, we decided to make the trip to see it, and if equal to our expectations to go there for a while when the steamer would make its second trip.

Our little voyage was very pleasant as long as we were under the lea of the promontory. There was an incessant laugh and chatter from some ladies, on board, till we reached the extreme point of the Portofino peninsula; then some lurches of the steamer caused a dead silence. Some of the ladies seemed to have forgotten something left in the cabin, a few more lurches sent the rest of them to leave more there; and when we had rounded the Capo di Monte, and were running under the windward face of the promontory, I wondered what sins I could have ever committed to deserve such condign punishment. We reached the inlet only some three quarters of an hour later—hard to believe, for it seemed a month—and another ten minutes we came to anchor within a stone's throw of the convent.

I soon got over the nausea of the sea trip; but never over the horrible colour which had lately been smeared over the whole face of the building. But for the lead-coloured stucco, lately applied, S. Fruttuoso would have been one of the most romantic and delightful places to sketch which I have ever struck. There was nothing

left to do but to make some careful drawings and try and paint the place as it might have been before its improvements.

The monastery dates back to the twelfth century, the lower part of the buildings corresponding to that period. Tradition, however, takes us back to the year 259, when the ashes of the Saints Fruttuoso, Augurio and Eulogio were brought here from Tarragona by their disciples, who, when they set sail, looked for divine guidance as to where they should take their precious burdens; and we are also told that after two days an angel appeared and pointed to where they should disembark. A dragon which for years had been the terror of that coast prevented their landing; but in answer to prayers, invisible hands threw the dragon into the sea. On landing they found a spring guarded by three lions, which, however, proved more tractable than the dragon, for we are told that these beasts marked out the site of the church and then humbly crouched at the feet of the pilgrims.

Whatever the origin of this Abbey may have been, we know that early in the twelfth century a colony of Benedictine monks had settled there and had built a convent. Many wealthy Genoese ended their days in this retreat, amongst others, members of the Doria family, the first of whom was Martino, the founder of the church of S. Matteo at Genoa, and who became Abbot in 1225. Pope Alexander III. was a guest here in 1162, and largely extended the rights of the Abbey

#### S. MARGHERITA

in the neighbouring parishes. Ere long the Abbots were in the position of feudal princes and could levy toll on all fish caught around the coasts of the promontory as well as on the game in which the forests abounded.

During the thirteenth century the crypt of the monastery became the last resting-place of the sea-faring members of the Doria family. On the mouldering tombs we can still trace the name of several, amongst others that of Egidio, one of the victors of the battle of Meloria.

To use the words of Dr. Hugh Macmillan: "No more appropriate burying-place for a race of sea-kings could be found than this lovely monastic solitude, to whose very walls the waves creep up, and in whose deserted cloisters the winds moan over the glories of the past."

"A place of tombs,
Where lie the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights; and over them the sea wind sings
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam."

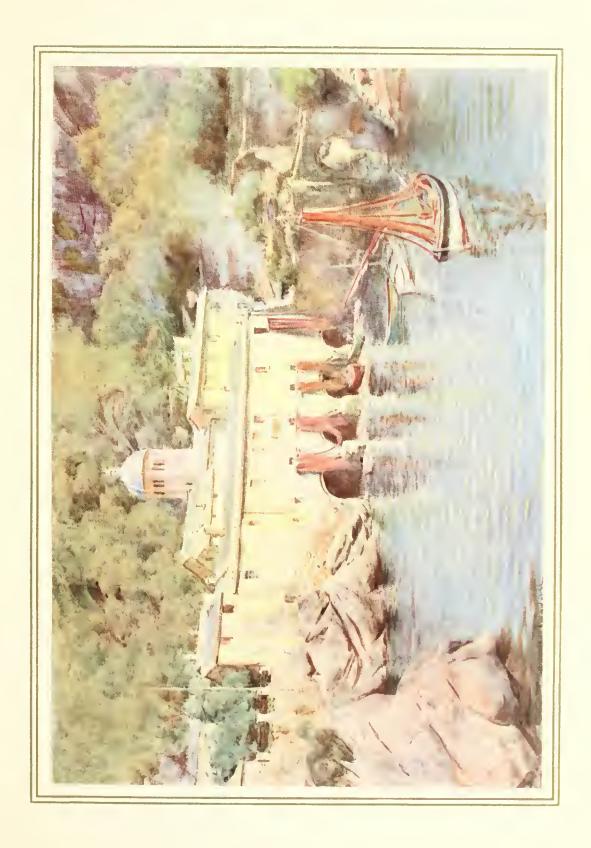
We have seen the burial place of Andrea Doria in Genoa; but we are reminded here of his activity by a tower which he built as a protection against the corsairs, and which is now used as the school for the children of the few poor fisher-folk—the only inhabitants of this once prosperous abbey.

Were it not for the horrible stucco which has lately

defaced the sea-front of the building, S. Fruttuoso would have been an ideal place for an artist to while away some of the winter months. The inn is certainly of the humblest, and, although the food consists mostly of fish and macaroni, it is good of its kind as well as being wholesome.



S. Fruttues?





#### CHAPTER III

CONCERNING THE HOST AND GUESTS OF THE "KAISER-HOF" AND THE ADVENT OF AN OPERATIC COMPANY

A SPELL of exceptionally cold weather induced me to stay on at S. Margherita much longer than I intended. What work I could do had to be done chiefly indoors and the "chauffage central" of my hotel made this a possibility, and one not to be had in the primitive inns in some of the more picturesque coast towns.

It was curious to find Russians sitting shivering near a radiator, and seldom venturing out on account of the cold. The ladies were regretting their furs, and were far from happy in those diaphanous stockings which now leave more ankle exposed than covered. Letters from their homes, describing exceptional snowfalls and severity of frost, failed to console them, for, as they remarked, in Russia they would have been prepared for it by their heating appliances as well as by their clothing for outdoor wear; and foolishly thinking that it was always mild and sunny down here they had left all their

warm apparel at home. The Italians who came here to escape the severe weather in Piedmont and Lombardy seemed to feel the cold less than the Russians, accounted for by the Italian home being usually in winter as cold and draughty a place as is to be found anywhere.

There was a mixed lot of nationalities, I being the only Englishman. There was one English lady, but she was the wife of an Italian, and doubtless there would have been others had the hotel not changed its name to "Kaiserhof." Not only do English and Germans frequent different hotels, but in some places (San Remo, for instance) they keep to different ends of the town. Now if they met more often, I feel persuaded that the strained relations we hear of would tend to lessen. A German gave me his reasons for avoiding hotels patronized chiefly by English, and they were: firstly, his fear of catching cold from the windows being opened at inopportune times, and being expected to put on evening dress for dinner, used as he was to wearing flannel shirts; secondly it meant carrying much more luggage with him, as a stock of evening shirts takes up a lot of space. His second reason appeals strongly to me, for one's luggage is the greatest nuisance while travelling in Italy. None of it goes free as in most other countries, and besides the bother of having it weighed every time one moves, one has to have it corded and sealed, even though the journey be to the next station. This means going to the station a good

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half-hour before the train is timed to start, and should it do so punctually, as has happened on rare occasions, one either misses the train or trusts to the luggage being sent on by a later one, after cording and sealing have been done after one's departure.

Relations are much more strained between Germans and Russians than between the former and the English, and yet they are often found in the same hotels, and manage to jog on together very amicably. The Poles are sometimes a disturbing element, they often showing their dislike to the people of the country to which they happen to be subjected. Political reasons are about the last which keep us English so isolated in foreign resorts. Few Englishmen speak any foreign language beyond a smattering of French, and the fear of appearing ridiculous makes them hesitate, more than others, to use the little they know.

Now here, in this cosmopolitan hotel, everyone, except a few Italians, spoke one or more languages besides their own. Conversation was therefore general; one heard the views held by one lot of countrymen of another, social matters were discussed from various social standpoints, manners and customs of different nationalities were compared and commented on. Many sentiments expressed would have startled a tea-party in Bayswater, still more one in Tooting; but I can conceive these entertainments as being very much duller than our gatherings around the radiators in the lounge at the "Kaiserhof."

Besides widening our views of other peoples, it is interesting to hear the views they hold in regard to us. These vary, of course, according to the kind of English the person expressing his views happens to have met, but there are certain ones held in common by most Continentals, namely, that our men are very reserved and suspicious of foreigners, and that our women are prudes and are shocked at remarks a nun might, without impropriety, make at a Sunday school. Politically we are thought hypocrites when we advocate peace and the abatement of armaments. "It is all very well for you," they say, "to wish things to remain as they are when you have absorbed all the best parts of the globe and left us only the desert places for our expansion." I heard this expressed by a German and commented on by a Frenchman in the following words: "For my own part the English may take the whole world, Germany included, as long as they admit our goods free. France is all-sufficing for us if only our Government would develop its resources to the uttermost; but there is one thing I object to in the English, and that is that wherever they set their feet they introduce their infernal whisky." The latter part of his speech was duly approved by those present, and the Frenchman then took his departure; but before closing the door he amused us very much by his parting remark: "Je suis négociant de cognac."

Whatever views Continentals may hold of us, it is certain that they copy us more and more. In matters

# CONCERNING THE HOST AND GUESTS

of dress it is now hard to distinguish an Englishman from most well-to-do foreigners; in sporting circles every other term one hears is an English one; at table, knives and forks are changed at every course, and salt cellars are no more spoonless; "le tub" is indulged by many on rising, and "le fiv o'clock té" is gaining in use. Only the old-fashioned tuck their napkins under their chins, and Germans are never seen eating an egg with a knife. For some of these things we may be duly thankful; but should this copying be carried very much further, travel may be made more comfortable, but less entertaining.

The hotels are all comparatively empty till after Christmas, and till then public entertainments are rare. The advent of an operatic company caused a sensation, especially at the Kaiserhof, where two of the leading characters put up. We had seen their names all over the town on posters informing us that Verdi's Rigoletto would be performed five nights in succession; it was therefore with no little surprise that we heard Signore Da Capo addressing La Signorina Allegretto in English, and with an American accent. La Signorina was accompanied by her mother, and, as luck would have it, the two ladies were placed at the table next to mine. I made some remark to the older lady, who looked up in surprise and said: "Well, this is a real pleasure to hear some English again, for I reckoned you were one of these Italians." When she was quite convinced of my nationality, both she and her daughter told me the

vexations and often miseries which fall to the lot of strolling players in Italy.

It appeared that they were people in easy circumstances, and, the daughter being determined to go on the operatic stage, they had gone to Milan, not so much for the training, which might have been got in America, but to be enabled to tour in the States as Signora Allegretto, late of the "Scala" of Milan. Now as leading parts in the Scala are not given to everybody, it was advisable to tour with small companies in the provincial towns so as to get practice in leading parts, and possibly get one at the Scala afterwards.

Now as the members of these companies are nearly all drawn from the humblest classes, have next to no education and are miserably paid, they are a strange lot for a handsome young lady of independent means to be thrown amongst. At every rehearsal the mother had to sit in the wings so as not to lose sight of her daughter for a moment, "for these Italians are liable to get a bit 'fresh,'" as she put it; and when some performances proved financial failures both ladies were besieged by some of the others to help them pay their night's lodging. I asked if none of them were going to put up at our hotel, which amused her very much, for she told me that even at the meanest osterie they were obliged to pay for their beds before using them. Besides the actual want the performers are often in, they are shown no mercy by their audiences should their part go amiss through any fault not their own.

#### CONCERNING THE HOST AND GUESTS

The ladies had to hurry off to attend the one and only rehearsal that the singers and their orchestra were to have together. Funds did not allow the musicians being brought from Milan, so they were collected as best they could in the neighbouring towns. Both the Prima Donna and the tenor were suffering from colds, and the latter, though a well-trained singer, had not yet made his déhut on the operatic stage. We saw no more of them till the mid-day meal on the following day, when the draughts and dust of an atrocious theatre had done their worst to increase their catarrhs.

The various hotels had guaranteed the finances to the extent of each one taking a box; so to indemnify our host, several of us took a four-franc seat in the one allotted to him. Ours was next to the stage, which unfortunately allows one to see as much as goes on in the opposite wings as on the stage itself. We had a long wait before we saw either. The curtain was billed to rise at eight-thirty, by which time all availing standing room was packed with people, and we found a crowd outside that could not possibly cram in. A few catcalls, an imitation of a pig being killed and the mimicry of other beasts by some young geniuses in the audience, kept the rest of it in good humour till nine o'clock. The *Maestro* not appearing by that time, the noise became indescribable and reached its climax when he appeared followed by his orchestra. Two or three taps on his music-stand produced a dead silence, and half

the population of S. Margherita changed from hooligans to musical critics.

When the curtain rose the audience seemed well disposed towards the tenor, who was a good-looking fellow and gorgeously attired as the Grand Duke. His new clothes as a débutant made those of his courtiers look painfully shabby and still more the old painted rags doing duty as the palace interior. The ludicrous mise-en-scène brought no jeers from the audience, wisely aware that the low prices of the seats could hardly run to expensive scenery; but no matter how low these prices may be an Italian audience will soon show its disapprobation of a singer should he or she not please them.

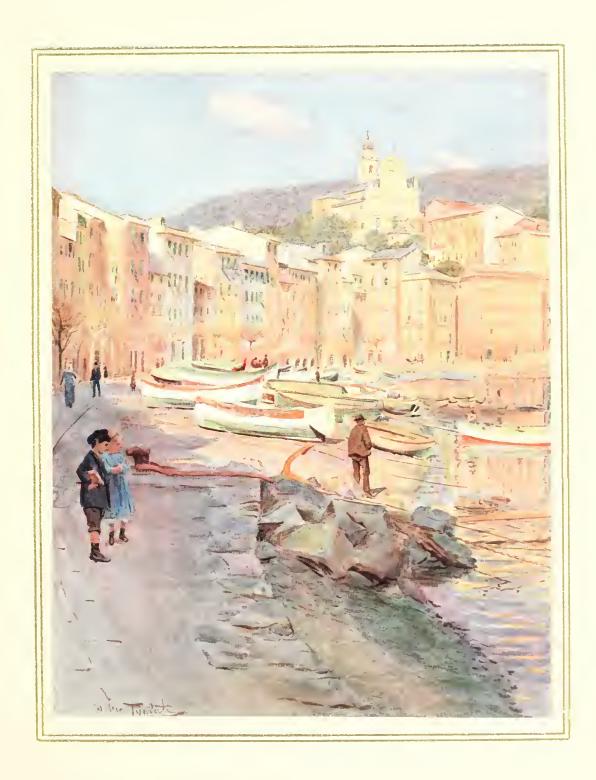
Both the Americans kept time with the orchestra more conscientiously than the Italians, and in spite of their colds they sang very well. There was no hissing, but neither was there much applause. The baritone who acted Rigoletto had a powerful voice and knew his audience. To be a bit out of time with the music bothered him very little—that was the orchestra's business; the Italian knew that to act with passion, and when necessary sing at the extreme pitch of his voice, was bound to bring down the house, and his reception was as warm a one as that of the two others was cold.

We saw nothing of the tenor the next day. It was rumoured about the hotel that he had packed his traps and was going to leave. A loud altercation in his room with his Impresario caused misgivings in those S. Margherita Ligure

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# S. Margherita Ligure

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#### CONCERNING THE HOST AND GUESTS

who had booked seats for that evening. Servants were cross-examined by the guests in the lounge, and everything pointed to the tenor having struck work. The theatre was again packed at half-past eight, while the tenor still kept his room. At nine the Maestro came rushing in, calling out "dove il tenore?" On being told he flew up the stairs, and at nine-thirty he came down followed by his tenor, dressed as the Grand Duke though partly disguised in an ulster.

The guests who attended that performance described the row in the theatre by the audience who had been kept waiting an hour and a half before the rise of the curtain. The tenor had sung very well; but an Italian from Genoa had been billed to take his place on the following nights.

In conversation with our tenor the next day some light was thrown on the mystery. It appeared that the Impresario, and the company who were running the show, were on the make. They were willing to allow the American to carry out his engagement providing he would forgo his payment, and for a consideration they would assure him plenty of applause. They made the most of the cold reception accorded to his acting, and pretended that the audience had insisted on a new tenor. Signore Da Capo, though a débutant on the operatic stage, was not a stranger to those who prey on his profession, and proved that a Yankee could be as cute as them. He had insisted on their carrying out their agreement and threatened not to act that night

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unless they did so. They then engaged another tenor from Genoa, trusting, no doubt, that the American would not sue them for breach of contract and thus advertise a professional failure. But the unforeseen defeated their machinations; the Genoese was prevented from coming that evening, and they had to make what terms they could to satisfy the impatient audience already in the theatre. It ended in their having to pay the salary of two tenors for the next three performances.

It was proposed by some of the guests that we should turn up en masse, the staff of the hotel included, and hiss tenor No. 2 off the stage. In punishing the Impresario and others concerned they would have inflicted a cruel punishment on the Genoese singer who was in no way to blame. I felt sure that the American, who was in every sense a gentleman, would not wish this, though he might appreciate the sympathy shown him; and this being so, tenor No. 2 was allowed to scream himself hoarse without any hostile demonstration.

As the population of S. Margherita is under 4,000 it is amazing that a full audience could be got five nights running for the same opera, especially as very few hotel guests attended. Although the prices are low wages are proportionably so, and it was the working classes who chiefly crowded the theatre. The Italian tenor had caught on, there was no "manca di bravura" in his case; and when I alluded to the hoarseness of the

### CONCERNING THE HOST AND GUESTS

Prima Donna the next day she answered: "I guess you would be hoarse if you had to scream at the top of your voice to make yourself heard alongside of that steam-whistle of a tenor."

The Italian guests were, to their credit, very indignant at the way their countrymen had treated the American; they were also amazed at the cool way in which he took it. He spent the remainder of the week with us, went excursions with the ladies, and we all enjoyed some delightful music in the evenings.

It is difficult to realize at home how great a hold music has on the mass of the people in Italy. Imagine an Opera Company going to a town the size of Deal or Minehead, and the whole population discussing the merits of two rival tenors, or workmen going home of an evening singing in parts some of the choruses. is true that the less-finished musician in the case of the tenors was the more appreciated, but that is owing to the Italians being a much more demonstrative people, and the "manca di bravura" in the American struck them as indifference on his part. Where ordinary talk is accompanied by so much gesture still more is expected in a dramatic rôle. I don't know whether this is an old story told me by an acquaintance, who assured me that he asked some information of a railway porter who was carrying his luggage and got this answer: "How can I explain this when both my hands are engaged?"

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#### CHAPTER IV

CHRISTMAS AT S. MARGHERITA, THE PRESEPIO AT SAN FRANCESCO, AND A FEW WORDS CONCERNING THE CONVENT OF CERVARA

THRISTMAS followed the operatic week, and the Church seemed determined that the faithful their thoughts to more serious should turn Snatches of chorus from Rigoletto were matters. drowned during the eve of the festival by the clanging of bells from every steeple. One of them happened to be within a stone's-throw of my window, and night was made hideous by the maddening sound of its bells. I began to have doubts as to whether the Italians were a musical people, for the bells don't harmonize, and there is no attempt at a peal as we understand it at home. Small boys keep up this din by banging the clappers against the bells without the least regard to time or harmony. It is said that the noise keeps the evil spirits away, and I should have thought most people would prefer the spirits as the lesser evil—it certainly kept off all sleep. Had the noise been continuous one might have slept through a part of it; but it would

#### CHRISTMAS AT S. MARGHERITA

cease long enough to allow the boy to descend from his perch till he was replaced by another, who coming fresh to his work seemed determined to outdo the last in noise-making. Dingle, dingle, dingle, this went on in an irregular jerky manner while a tired boy in another steeple laboured at another clapper just half a tone lower. Services must have been going on all night, and there were few pauses on the following day.

Christmas comes more suddenly on one in Italy than at home, where great displays of butcher's meat and dead turkeys prepare the just and the unjust for the coming feast. Until awakened by this horrible noise I was not aware that the eve of the "Natale" had come.

I walked over to Rapallo in the morning to attend the service at the Anglican church. I passed some groups of Germans near their "Lutheranische Kirche" and heard them wishing each other "Gesegnete Hochzeit." The "Merry Christmas" greeted my ear as I approached the little English church, and what with the fresh English faces around me, the evergreen decorations, and the familiar Christmas hymns, it was hard to believe I was not in England once more; but where were the familiar faces dear to me?

Cold and bleak as it often is during our Christmastide, I pity the Englishman who passes it abroad without a pang of home-sickness. A spell of fine weather had succeeded a series of cold and wet days, the Riviera was looking what the advertisements try in vain to paint it, but I would willingly have exchanged that day for a

sloppy one in Surrey had some good fairy been able to translate me there.

Our landlady being a German, Christmas was kept at the Kaiserhof as in the Fatherland. There was a Christmas-tree with the usual trimmings: candles, glass ba'ls, and tinsel, with presents for relations and members of the household. There was an interminable dinner at seven, in which the turkey was a mere incident and the plum pudding conspicuous by its absence. Healths of Kaiser, Czar, Re Emanuele, and President Taft were drunk in Asti Spumante, and in my special honour those of King George and Queen Mary. Songs patriotic and sentimental, chiefly German and Russian, large glasses of Munich beer, conjuring tricks and recitations, helped to pass a very pleasant evening.

The presepio (i.e. manger), displayed annually at the Franciscan convent, is the prettiest I have ever seen in Italy. On a good-sized stage in a room adjoining the church, the scene at the grotto at Bethlehem is portrayed in the same spirit as the Primitives would have treated it. The anachronisms in the costumes and background as well as the introduction of successive incidents in the one picture is thoroughly quattrocento. And this is done with no affectation, but in the same reverent spirit in which these poor monks have annually prepared this children's treat since the order was first established here. There is a childishness about it which makes a direct appeal to the children, and it is not lost on the humble grown-up folk who flock to see it.

# CHRISTMAS AT S. MARGHERITA

The Virgin Mary is gorgeously robed, and with the Child Jesus on her lap she is seated on a little throne in front of the manger, with the ox and the ass standing like acolytes on each side. Elaborate halos of tinsel and coloured beads crown the heads of the three personages of the Holy Family. St. Joseph, who stoops in an attitude of adoration, has his halo so balanced that it should not fall over his nose. The little wax candles, the glass balls and tinsel adorning the grotto, reminded me too much of the Kaiserhof Christmas-tree; but no incongruity seemed to strike the faithful who gathered there. The shepherds are clad in sheep-skin jackets, as may still be seen in the Abbruzzi Mountains or in Palestine. The sheep are unusually large, being little smaller than the ox or the ass, but we must not be too critical in the matter of proportion. Dotted about the space in front of the grotto are Italian contadini and many other available costumed figures—one with a distinct cut of Napoleon I. about him; others had doubtless served in their time, round now disused altars, as saints and martyrs; but a fresh coat of paint and some bits of costume had converted them into those little Italian images to be seen in most countries, except perhaps in Palestine.

The arrangement of the background is most ingenious. The distant Apennines top some village-crested nearer hills, and with the aid of mirrors the actual sea and coast is brought within the picture.

A rostrum stands near the stage, and from this

children recite verses in honour of the Bambino. After each recitation the child would deposit some little offering on the stage, and as the puppets vary in size from one to two feet the oranges thrown amongst them seemed colossally large. Reverence changed to loud laughter when an over-zealous little girl bowled over one of the sheep with a lemon.

The presepio was on view from Christmas until the Epiphany, and on the latter festival the three Magi are introduced. This was the climax: Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar, in gorgeous apparel, knelt in adoration before the Blessed Virgin and Child. Swarthy retainers, ladies with gifts, and camels with their drivers followed in their train. I had forgotten the star. The ingenious monk had called in modern science, and by means of an electric light gave us a star of exceptional brilliance, and also lighted thereby the dark parts of the grotto.

An Italian friend introduced me to some of the monks, and before being taken over the monastery we were obliged to drink some wine, grown and pressed on the premises. The present buildings and church only date from the beginning of the seventeenth century, but stand on the site of a much earlier convent. Those monks of old knew how to choose a site; from the terraced garden with a southern aspect, as well as from most of the cells, they get a magnificent view of the sea and coast. They also had the protection of the castle, the remains of which adjoin them, and, above all, they

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found a copious water-supply—no small matter this in places so often besieged.

After the suppression of the monasteries the buildings were bought by Prince Centurione, and given back to the brotherhood. The huge Villa Centurione and its spacious grounds are on the hill overlooking the convent.

Frate Luigi showed us all over the premises; he pointed out the trees which bore the heaviest crops, and the speckled hen that laid on an average four eggs a week. Some precocious blossom on an old pear-tree filled him with delight, not so much in the promise of spring, as in its being the first one in that neighbourhood to bloom. Though he daily went outside on his begging rounds, little beyond the convent walls had much interest for him.

My friend had introduced me as the greatest living painter and a writer seldom equalled since the days of Dante. I think he allowed a bit for the slight exaggeration of my friend, but thought it, nevertheless, incumbent on him to get me to inspect all the pictures as well as the books in the library. There we saw the familiar Franciscan saints, kneeling with a skull in their hands and a hatchet sticking in their heads. Blackened canvases, in fly-spotted frames, depicted the torture of an early Christian, or the same Christian being carried by angels to a dirty-yellow light on some brown clouds. The books were more interesting on account of their old covers and the illumination of the initial letters.

But what food for the mind! When we consider that such convents were, in the Middle Ages, the seats of learning, and that little scholarship existed outside their walls, it is sad to think of the mental starvation of these present monks. And these Capuchins are even better off than many others who rarely go out into the world; for if their intellect be little exercised their visits to the poor and needy do at all events widen their sympathies.

I paid this convent several visits for the purpose of making some studies in the garden; I always found the monks most courteous and obliging. My work has often brought me in contact with Italian ecclesiastics, and I cannot endorse Dickens' description of them in his delightful "Pictures from Italy," where he says: streets of Genoa would be all the better for the importation of a few priests of prepossessing appearance. Every fourth or fifth man in the street is a priest or a monk; and there is pretty sure to be at least one itinerant ecclesiastic inside or outside every hackney carriage in the neighbourhood. I have no knowledge, elsewhere, of more repulsive countenances than are to be found among these gentry. If Nature's handwriting be at all legible, greater varieties of sloth, deceit, and intellectual torpor could hardly be observed among any class of men in the world."

Now this was written in 1846, and it is hardly credible that in as conservative an institution as the Church of Rome those who exercise its functions should

Entrance to the Villa Centurione,
S. Margherita Ligure

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# CHRISTMAS AT S. MARGHERITA

have changed very much in so short a time. He makes some exception for the Cappucini, of whom he writes: "Though not a learned body, they are, as an order, the best friends of the people. They seem to mingle with them more immediately, as their counsellors and comforters; and to go among them more when they are sick; and to pry less than some other orders into the secrets of families for the purpose of establishing a baneful ascendancy over their weaker members; and to be influenced by a less fierce desire to make converts, and, once made, to let them go to ruin, soul and body. They may be seen, in their coarse dress, in all parts of the town at all times, and begging in the markets early in the morning. The Jesuits, too, muster strong in the streets, and go slinking noiselessly about, in pairs, like black cats."

This is surely too severe an indictment. Keen observer as was Dickens, a year's sojourn in Italy had not sufficed to clear his mind of insular prejudice. He spoke little Italian and probably had little intercourse with any of them. There certainly is "intellectual torpor" amongst the friars as well as amongst the village clergy, as many a cultured priest I have met would be the first to allow. But does this apply particularly to Italy? Uncultured as the village priest often is, he is still far more educated than his parishioners, and the wonder is that so many intelligent men are to be had, who, for a starvation wage, will bury themselves in remote parishes.

The "fierce desire to make converts" that Dickens and many others accuse them of is, after all, one of the duties of anyone who undertakes a cure of souls, be he Protestant or Catholic.

There is no spot in S. Margherita which would tempt me more to return there than the convent garden at S. Francesco; but not in mid winter, for although the sun had sufficient power to coax some blossoms on the pear-tree, ice lay crisp in the shadows of the terrace walls. It was just possible to work there while the sun made diapers on the pergola-covered walks; but, when once he sank behind Portofino, sketching had to be abandoned. The time here would be when spring had fulfilled its promise, or in the fall when the trailing vines were heavy with purple clusters.

A much more important monastery than S. Francesco is that of Cervara, situated about a mile from S. Margherita, on the Portofino road. It looked very attractive from a distance, rising as it does above a grand mass of stone pines on a ledge in the precipitous rocks, its tower and battlements suggesting a stronghold more than a conventual building. Great was, however, my disappointment when, after a climb up to the terrace on which it stands, I found what was apparently a new building, stuccoed over, and with sham joints neatly squared so as to suggest well-faced blocks of stone; parts were painted to represent brickwork and painted machicolations bordered the gable of the chapel. Could this be the famous Cervara where St. Catherine

# CHRISTMAS AT S. MARGHERITA

stayed on her journey to Avignon? Where Gregory XI. celebrated his first mass on Italian soil, after Catherine had induced him to return to Rome? Where John of Austria found hospitality after his victorious fight at Lepanto, and where Francis I. was carried a prisoner after his defeat at Pavia?

The church was closed and no one seemed about from whom I could get some information. I saw nothing I wanted to paint except some of the pines, and the peeps of the sea beyond; but no need to climb up to Cervara for that.

I looked up Cervara in local guide-books and doubtless it is the same ancient monastery; but restored in 1872 under the superintendence of Padre Eugenio Vairo. Dedicated to S. Gerolamo della Cervara, the convent was founded in 1361 and built by Guido Scetten, the Archbishop of Genoa and intimate friend of Petrarch. In 1364 a Benedictine brotherhood was established, which Scetten joined; and in the frequent companionship of Petrarch the archbishop here ended his days.

A tablet in one of the rooms records the fact that Francis I. remained there as a prisoner in 1525 until Charles V. had him conveyed to Madrid. Dr. Hugh Macmillan tells us that: "Andrea Doria, who had been the admiral of the French monarch during his war with the Emperor, and had made the French name predominant in the Mediterranean, was resting with his fleet at Portofino, not two miles distant, and could

easily have released his royal master from his prison, if he had wished. But the great Genoese admiral had other designs, and transferred his services to Pope Clement VII. while Francis I. was left in his prison until the arrival of the vessels which conveyed him to Spain."

Doria seems to have changed masters with as little compunction as did the *condottieri* of the previous century. Whether France or Spain reigned supreme in the Mediterranean was probably equally hateful to him, and he gave his services to whichever side might at the time be most beneficial to the Genoese Republic.

As this Benedictine monastery rose in importance that of S. Fruttuoso declined. Its reforming influence was felt in all the monastic establishments on the Ligurian coast. It was suppressed by the Genoese revolutionaries in 1799, and five years later it was reopened and given to the Trappists. Napoleon at first subsidized the latter; but shortly afterwards relegated them to the island of Caprera. Deserted for more than half a century, Cervara fell into decay, and its present habitable state is due to the gimcrack restorations of Padre Eugenio Vairo, of whom we have spoken. It is now occupied by French monks of a sub-order of the Benedictines.

The square tower, made to look a sham by stupid restoration, dates from the same period as a similar one at S. Fruttuoso, namely, the middle of the sixteenth century. A revival of Saracen aggression is the cause of

# CHRISTMAS AT S. MARGHERITA

so many of these later towers seen on this coast. The disgraceful alliance of Francis I. with the Turks may have led to the renewed activity of the Saracens after the war between Empire and Monarchy had subsided. Andrea Doria was then in the service of neither party and could happily devote his powers to combating the fresh peril. The neighbouring town of Rapallo appears to have fared worse than the others; but we will defer that town to another chapter.

#### CHAPTER V

RAPALLO AND ITS STORY; THE CHURCH OF S. MICHELE
AND THE VAN DYCK WHICH IT CONTAINS

TF we look at our maps we will see Rapallo tucked in the eastern angle at the base of the promontory of Portofino; which promontory with the main coast forms the Gulf of Tigullio, now generally called the Gulf of Rapallo. As seen from the sea one might suppose (were it not for the old castle which rises from the water) that the town had been built by speculative hotel companies during the last twenty years. reality Rapallo has been in existence as long as the Christian era. The Aurelian road ran along this coast for a century before Christ, and it was not long before a Ligurian tribe, known as the Tigulli, formed a settlement here. The Rapallesi until recently claimed that their town was on the site of ancient Tigullia; but archæologists now prove that to have been further east near the present town of Chiavari. There is a good deal of doubt as to the origin of this people, though the theory that it was of Iberian stock is gaining ground.

Of their struggles to maintain their independence against Rome history relates little except that they espoused the cause of Hannibal during the second Punic war. But if history tells us little, legendary tales abound, and, needless to say, all to the credit of these people.

During the reign of Augustus, Liguria formed the ninth of the eleven districts into which Italy was divided. It was made a consulate at the time of Constantine and remained as such till the break-up of the Western Empire.

In the latter part of the sixth century the parish church of Rapallo was built by Onorato, Bishop of Milan, who, driven out of this diocese by the Lombards, had taken refuge in Genoa. The Eastern Emperor gave him temporal power over the promontory of Portofino, and he received spiritual power over the same district from the Pope. It is said that he was buried at Noceto, a prettily situated village which lies between Rapallo and Recco; but being canonized after his death, one of the Visconti had his body removed, in the thirteenth century, to Milan, where it now lies in the church of S. Eustorgio.

The history of Rapallo is soon after merged into that of Genoa, with which Republic it was at first allied and by which it was later absorbed. This was at first of great advantage, for independently the little town could not defend itself against the attacks of the Barbary pirates who infested this coast; but it had to pay for this later on by incurring the hostility of Pisa. For

more than two centuries the coast from Rapallo to the harbour of Portofino was harassed by the Pisans. The Mediterranean did not seem large enough for two such sea powers as Genoa and Pisa, and until the latter was finally crushed by the Genoese fleet at the battle of Meloria in 1284, the Rapallesi fared nearly as badly by the Pisans as by the hands of the Barbary corsairs. This new enemy attacked the town in 1079, set fire to it, and after killing many of the inhabitants carried others away captive, both men and women.

The excellent guide, "Rapallo: Past and Present," gives us some details of the battle of Meloria which ensured a peaceful time to the Rapallesi until they began quarrelling amongst themselves. "In 1284," it says, 'Alberto Morosini, admiral of the Pisan fleet, entered the Gulf of Genoa, seized merchant ships, defied the towns, and sacked Rapallo. Morosini was a nephew of the Doge of Venice. He had been elected podestà of Pisa as well as admiral. In his fleet were Loto and Anselmo, sons of that Conte Ugolino della Gherardesca of whose tragic death Dante gives a touching description in the thirtieth canto of the Inferno. Ugolino fought in the fatal battle of Meloria, deserting the Pisan fleet at a critical moment. Thirty Genoese galleys under Benedetto Zaccharia, and eighty under Oberto Doria, repaired to Pisa, having previously met off the promontory of Portofino. At the rock of Meloria the Pisans and Genoese waged fierce battle for the supremacy of the Every kind of weapon and artifice was used in waves.

the fight—lime, burning oil and soap, stones and darts; but in spite of the splendid resistance made by the Pisans victory remained with the Genoese. Half the Pisan fleet was destroyed, the Admiral Morosini with the standard and seal of the commune was taken; and so great a number of Pisan prisoners filled the dungeons of Genoa, that the popular saying arose, 'To see Pisa you must go to Genoa.' Egidio Doria, one of the victors of Meloria, lies buried at S. Fruttuoso.''

We are also told that in 1293 the English embassy on the way to the Khan of Persia stayed at Rapallo.

The peace in Genoa was constantly disturbed by the faction fights between the Guelfic and Ghibelline families: the Fieschi and Grimaldi of the former, and the Doria and Spinola of the latter. The feuds had their echo in Rapallo, where families related to those in Genoa took up the quarrel. The townspeople were Guelfs, and, as an instance of the bitterness between the factions, we are told by a chronicler how in 1319, when some Ghibelline galleys were wrecked in the port of Rapallo, the inhabitants massacred their crews. opportunity for making common cause occurred in 1432, when a Venetian fleet came and harried their coast. Shortly after this they were drawn into the war between Alfonso of Aragon and Louis of Anjou, who were contending for the throne of Naples. Filippo Visconti, Duke of Milan, was then all-powerful in Genoa, and had espoused the cause of Anjou. Biagio Assareto

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(a native of the village of S. Quirico, a few miles from Rapallo) was the admiral who defeated Alfonso at Gaeta, and took him captive to Genoa, as well as his brother John, King of Navarre.

A series of disputes between the Fregosi, the Fieschi, and the Adorni kept things lively during the second half of the century. It was perhaps in 1494 that Rapallo suffered most, and owing to a war with which it had little concern. Charles VIII. of France had advanced into Italy, at the invitation of Ludovico Sforza, to wrest the throne of Naples from Alfonso of Aragon. Bought over by France as well as the Duke of Milan, Genoa aided the enterprise. Frederick, son of King Alfonso, sailed to Genoa to attack that city with his Neapolitan troops; but failing in this, he proceeded to Rapallo, and early in September he landed Obietto Fieschi with three or four thousand infantry. This Obietto Fieschi, who was fighting for the Aragonese, was a brother to Gian Luigi Fieschi, who was on the French side.

I will quote what follows from the Rapallo guide, to which I am indebted for many of the facts already given:

"The Duke of Orleans had arrived in Genoa with strong contingents of French and Swiss troops, and with the Milanese governor decided on the attack of Rapallo, where the enemy lay. On September 7th the Duke of Orleans left Genoa and drove Frederick of Aragon back towards Livorno. At the same time troops under the Governor Adorno marched from Genoa to reinforce

Orleans, approaching Rapallo by Ruta and S. Maria del

Campo.

A fierce battle ensued, the advantage lying first with one side and then with the other, until the peasants of the district (partisans of the Adorno), attacking the Aragonese from the heights, forced them to take cover behind the palisades. Obietto Fieschi continued a brave fight, but the arrival of the Swiss soldiers at the mouth of the river Boato gave the finishing blow to the wavering men, who were seized by panic and fled, pursued by the enemy. Two hundred Neapolitans and Aragonese were killed in the fight—not a small number, considering the manner of warfare in those days. But a horrible massacre took place at Rapallo. The French and the Swiss went through the town sacking and killing, and even broke into the hospital of S. Antonio, where they slaughtered fifty poor sick people—mostly lepers—who were lying there. Giovanni Adorno, trying to pacify their fury, nearly had his throat cut. With a few followers Obietto Fieschi took refuge in the hills, where he awaited help from his vassals of Fontanabuona; but the rumour spreading of the speedy approach of his brother Gian Luigi with 800 soldiers, he was abandoned by his own people."

It seems singularly hard on the Rapallesi that they should have been so badly served by Charles' troops,

seeing that they had espoused his cause.

The French met few obstacles during their victorious march through Central Italy, and for a time they

occupied Naples. Italy, however, soon discovered that in welcoming Charles VIII. and his troops it was little more than a change of masters. The Italian states formed a league to oppose them, including the Duke of Milan, who had invited the French monarch.

During the struggle to get rid of their new masters a French fleet came to Rapallo and occupied it. Genoa came to its assistance and sent eight galleys under the command of Francesco Spinola, who not only routed the French garrison, but also destroyed their fleet.

A visit from the Emperor Maximilian followed soon after the expulsion of the French, and for a year or two the Empire was all-powerful in Italy; but in 1499 the lilies of France were seen once more on the walls of the communal palace.

The Genoese government had sworn fealty to the successor of Charles VIII., Louis XII. Every town on the Riviera which was dependent on Genoa broke out in open rebellion, and in Genoa itself there was a growing anti-French party. This reached a climax in 1512, when the French were turned out, and the Genoese Republic was restored.

Now follows the struggle between Francis I. and Charles V., Italy still being the bone of contention. We have alluded, in the last chapter, to the part Andrea Doria took in this struggle and how he became supreme in the councils of the Republic.

The comparative peace enjoyed by the people of

Rapallo was rudely disturbed on the night of the 6th of July, 1549.

Dragut—a name which mothers still use to frighten their children—who fought under Barbarossa, Dey of Algiers, and the scourge of the Mediterranean during a half of the sixteenth century, landed in Rapallo while the inhabitants were peaceably sleeping in their beds. and his fellow pirates laid waste the town, slaughtering all who resisted, and carried off men, women and sold in the African slave-markets. children to be Emboldened by their success similar descents were periodically made on one or other of the Riviera towns. "Night after night," we are told, "the lurid watch-fires blazed far into the darkness on the beacon towers along the coast, whose ruins add so much to the quaint charm of the Ligurian towns, warning the inhabitants that the dreaded foe was near and might at any moment land."

Dragut was captured, in the Gulf of Giralatta in Corsica, by Gianettino Doria, the adopted son of Andrea. Many captives were liberated, and many of the pirate dhows were destroyed; but in a weak moment Gianettino released Dragut on payment of a large ransom; and before long he and his corsairs were even a greater terror to the coast than before. It was time now for Andrea Doria to act. In spite of his great age, he girt his armour, and at the head of an adequate fleet he gave chase to the pirates. Driven from place to place, Doria brought them to bay in the harbour of the

island of Gerbe, and, satisfied that he held them fast here, he deferred his final settlement with them till the following morning. One can imagine his surprise on awaking to find that the corsair galleys had disappeared. Under cover of darkness Dragut had mounted his galleys on wheels and transported them across the island and sailed away from the opposite shore. In spite of this marvellous escape his power was broken, and he ceased to harass the towns on the Riviera. We hear of him ten years later when he was killed during the siege of Malta.

From henceforward the history of Rapallo becomes one with that of the Genoese Republic. A letter written in 1797 by Bonaparte to the authorities in Rapallo is interesting, showing how badly the countryfolk headed by their parish priests took to the new regime. "The citizen Roggieri," he writes, "has communicated to me the different edicts showing what you have done in those difficult days. . . . Work with strength! Have the rebellious villages disarmed and the bad priests arrested —those creatures who preach violence instead of the morals of the Gospel; expel those rascals of parrochi who have made the people revolt, and armed the good peasants against their own cause. . . . Announce to the enemies of liberty that I have a hundred thousand men to add to your National Guard, and with which to clear away the very traces of your enemies."

The family of Spinola—a name only second in this part of Italy to that of Doria—have their villa at S.

Michele, a hamlet on the road from Rapallo to S. Margherita. It is called the Villa Pagana, for what reason I cannot tell. In its beautiful grounds are the ruins of the medieval castle which protected the village, circling the inlet below, and from which assistance could be sent to either Rapallo or S. Margherita when the common enemy, the Saracens, threatened that shore. But it is more with the church of S. Michele adjoining the grounds that we are concerned, for, apart from Genoa, it contains the only really great work of art, which I know of, in the whole Riviera. It represents the Crucified Christ, with St. Francis and St. Bernard, and on the right side is a kneeling figure, apparently the donor. Van Dyck was the painter; but that of itself is not enough to ensure a really impressive treatment of a sacred subject, for many of his earlier works, before portraiture took up most of his time, are lacking in religious sentiment. It is a low-toned canvas, with the light falling on the torso of our Lord, and repeated on the heads of the other figures. The actual painting is not only that of Van Dyck at his best, but the conception of the whole is worthy of Tintoret.

That such a work should be so badly cared for almost justifies the wholesale despoiling of altars to cover the walls of municipal museums, which is one of the painful sights most lovers of art are subject to in Italy. It is right that this canvas should remain where it is, and in the place it was intended for; but some pressure should be used on those who have it in their keeping to

ensure its proper care. It is begrimed with dirt, chiefly smoke from the altar candles, which are perilously near the picture; and the whole of the lower part is sputtered over with candle grease. Tawdry altar ornaments give unpleasant notes of colour to the foreground, a part of which they hide, and a cross light (easily avoided) makes it difficult to see the remainder. And yet, in spite of this, the picture does not fail to make a deep impression. If its artistic value be not appreciated by those who own it, they are, nevertheless, aware of its money value, and I should have thought that enough to make them care better for it.

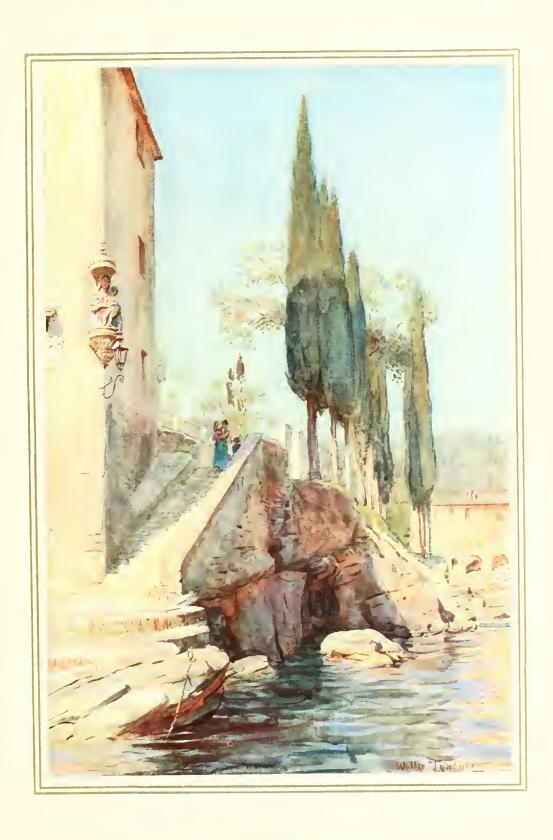
The story told of how it came here is interesting. Van Dyck had killed his man in a duel, and was obliged to fly from Genoa. He found a refuge in the Villa Pagana where he stayed with its owners until it was deemed safe for him to return to Genoa. The church (more or less the private chapel of the Orero family, with whom the painter had been staying) had lately been rebuilt on the site of a medieval one, and Van Dyck, as a return for the hospitality received, painted this picture to adorn the family altar of his hosts.

Enough still remains at Rapallo to prove that it was, possibly as little as thirty years since, a picturesque coast town. Its situation is beautiful, and the mountains which back it are fine in contour. The men were mainly occupied in catching fish or dredging for coral, and the women were noted lace-makers. But now huge hotels and pensions have vulgarized its appearance; and

At S. Michele, Rapallo

.4t S Michele Rapallo

THE PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN





the young women are abandoning their lace cushions to go into service, and the men are blackening foreigners' boots. The steps down to the sea at S. Michele, of which we give an illustration, is a little bit left to remind us of the many things these hotels and promenades have displaced.

#### CHAPTER VI

SOME OF THE HUMOURS OF HOTEL LIFE, TOGETHER WITH
AN EXCURSION TO PORTOFINO KULM

AKING the winter as a whole, more grumbling at the weather may be because during the same period in England. Spells of fine weather are more frequent and they also last longer than at home, and this is taken by foreigners as a matter of course. But let it rain for a couple of days on end, and it is considered a grievance compared with which stamp-licking and super-tax are mere trifles. Everyone admires the prolific growth of the trees and shrubs, enjoys the masses of flowers and early vegetables seen here long before winter gives way to spring—and yet how are we to enjoy these things were the entire winter to pass under a cloudless sky? "Where's your sunny south?" will be the form of greeting if one meets an acquaintance hurrying along under an umbrella. "This reminds me of an enforced stay at Grimsby where I had to attend a funeral some winters ago," may be heard from behind the Times newspaper, and

# SOME OF THE HUMOURS OF HOTEL LIFE

those who do not vent their feelings in sarcasm wear a we-ought-to-have-our-money-back kind of expression. The fact remains the same that rainy days are more or less the exception, in winter on the Riviera, whereas they are more or less the rule with us.

The winter of 1913-14 was an exceptionally severe one in the north of Italy, the Italian papers were full of the heavy falls of snow in Milan and Turin. Trains were blocked by the snow, and were hours late at the stations. Italians, who usually reserve their seaside visits for the summer, came to the coast for shelter; and it seemed strange to hear so many well-to-do people speaking Italian, where English and German is generally heard. "One might imagine oneself in Italy," remarked the sarcastic friend.

S. Margherita is not so sheltered but that an echo of this severe weather was bound to reach it. It reached us right enough, early in January, and I could amuse myself during some days in making studies, from my window, of the Piazza Mazzini, which I overlooked. The statue of the patriot was a degree less atrocious than those of other patriots erected in S. Margherita by a grateful people. It looked picturesque with the rain running down its back, and its reflections in the pools beneath. It is the starting-place for all the rickety old chars-à-bancs that ply between this and the neighbouring villages, and together with groups of peasants with green and other tinted umbrellas they made a pretty spot of colour in the universal greyness of the scene. I

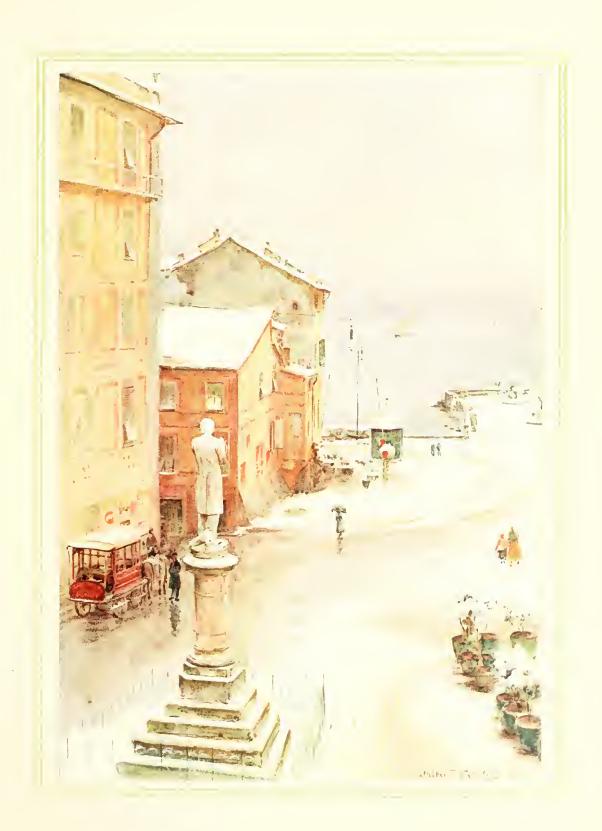
intended keeping this drawing to illustrate this book, for if it did nothing else it would have been a fresh note of colour amongst a number painted in sunlight. A chance acquaintance, however, insisted on buying it, which rather surprised me, and the reason he gave surprised me still more: he wished to take back something as a souvenir of the Riviera. I did not part with it till a still stranger "souvenir of the Riviera" had been painted from my window, and that is the same piazza under snow.

One is tired of hearing of the "oldest inhabitant," who, according to hotel keepers, has a poor memory for any exceptionally bad weather. According to some it was fifty years since any snow lay for more than a few hours on the ground; others said twenty, but that was when no hotel keeper was listening; but be this as it may, it was certainly a very unusual event. The snow was mostly slush by mid-day, though it lasted for several days on the roofs, and it was about a week before a lump melted on Mazzini's head. He is generally known as a hot head, while others more acquainted with his history assure us that he could keep a cool one under very trying circumstances. The sculptor was evidently of that opinion.

How vastly more the great names figuring in the Liberation of Italy would appeal to most of us had the statues they commemorate, seen in every town of the Peninsula, been the work of geniuses such as Verrocchio or Donatello! As well as the disparity in genius, the

Piazza Mazzini, S. Margherita

Piarza N zzini, S. Nars rita





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modern sculptor had less sculpturesque attire to deal The very names, Colleone or Gattamelata, appeal to the imagination, and, if familiar with their presentments, it is hard to associate mean actions or sordid motives with either. But unless we know the lives of such men as Mazzini and Cavour, what impression do we get of them from the numerous statues we constantly meet?—a commonplace-looking attorney in one case, and a well-fed bourgeois in the other. Clothes count for something, I admit; the quattrocento armour in which Colleone is clad is more pictorial than the coat and trousers of the sixties. But had a Verrocchio given us a statue of Cavour the greatness of the subject would, through the genius of the sculptor, have made its appeal, and the cut of the trousers would have remained unnoticed.

What were, after all, these fifteenth-century condottieri? Men ready to sack a town and burn villages in behalf of any master who paid them best. Whereas the patriots of the Risorgimento staked their lives and property for the realization of a noble ideal. A comparison of an equestrian statue of Victor Emanuel with that of Colleone is perhaps more to the point. Does the former suggest a great warrior and a king with the attributes of true kingship, or does he, pirouetting on his horse, suggest more than a circus performer doing a turn of la baute école? And yet he staked his life, his throne, and gave up years of ease and comfort in the great work of liberating his country.

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Verrocchio and Donatello could thus idealize the mercenaries they portrayed, what might they not have achieved in the portrayal of Victor Emanuel or Garibaldi?

The authorities are nevertheless right in ordering statues; it is only by making statues that statue-making is to be learnt. Some recent ones are already far superior to those of the sixties, and should a twentieth-century Donatello appear many of the latter will be replaced by his work. It speaks well both for the patriotism of the S. Margheritesi and of their desire to encourage the arts that, in their town of less than 3,000 inhabitants, there are eight monuments erected to men who have deserved well of their country.

The statue to Christopher Columbus is probably due to the munificence of the *Americani* who have returned here with Argentine *cedulas* in their pockets.

As the weather got milder most of the Italian guests returned to their homes in Piedmont and Lombardy; we were also approaching the season when the influx of foreigners is at its height, and the Kaiserhof began to fill up with Germans. The old name, "Centrale," was absent on the new crockery and napery, and displaced by that of "Kaiserhof." The landlord probably saw with his German Frau that German custom would be more lucrative than that of his own countrymen, and seemed reconciled to the disappearance of the older name. Should other seasons bring English custom, it is possible that they have a "Windsor" or a "Carlton" up their sleeves to tack on to the Kaiserhof.

# SOME OF THE HUMOURS OF HOTEL LIFE

A change in the menu was also noticeable; gnocchi and paste asciutte became rarer dishes, while sauerkraut and sausages were of daily occurrence. The few remaining Italians murmured, and were ready to revolt at the second appearance of roast goose served with pears and plums. Having moved about the globe a good deal, I can fortunately eat anything from a shark's fin to a pumpkin pie, providing they be properly prepared; I did not therefore join the deputation to solicit a return to the previous fare. On an increase of German guests casks of Munich and Pilsen beer were broached every evening, and this made ample compensation for the shortcomings of the roast goose.

The Russian ladies were also about to return to their country and seemed exercised in their minds as to how they could smuggle their purchases through the customs. There was no lack of suggestions from the other guests. The thinner lady was advised to wind the lace garments, and other pliable goods, in bands round her person, which, if artfully done, would, if possible, improve her figure as well as keep her warm on her journey; care, of course, to be taken not to be so stout as to excite the suspicions of the customs officials. Lady smugglers are now much handicapped by their narrow skirts; neat things in Paris shoes could formerly be negotiated beneath the ample garments of a past fashion. days of the bustle I heard of a clock being carried inside that aid to beauty, and it would have passed the customs unnoticed had not the ticking excited suspicion. The

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soles of boots were rubbed on the pavement to make believe that they had been worn; even water-colour stains were hinted at, as being easily washed out, and would help to pass some parasols.

A German described a scene he had witnessed at the frontier of his country. There were three passengers beside himself in his compartment, two ladies and a gentleman. The former expressed their fears as to the way they had hid their lace, and the latter assured them that if they folded it carefully it could all be pinned inside their hats, and that the customs officials would not look there. They did as instructed, and on arriving at the frontier an official entered the compartment to examine the hand baggage. Everyone said that they had nothing to declare, and a superficial look at the ladies' hand-bags satisfied the officer, who after this was about to examine a portmanteau of the male passengers. But imagine the horror of the ladies when they saw their pretended friend touch his head with his finger and with a wink of the eye point to their hats. The official at once ordered the ladies to take them off, and, on discovering the lace, they had to follow him to the customs office, where they were mulcted in a fine and the lace was confiscated. After they had all safely passed the frontier, the man who had acted so strangely, to say the least of it, begged the ladies to allow him to recoup them to the amount of their fine, and as for the lace, he said: "You are welcome to six times what you have lost." Then opening his portmanteau he said: "Take 66.

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what you want—the mean trick I played on you has enabled me to smuggle more than a thousand pounds' worth of lace through the customs."

That smuggling, which includes making a false declaration, is dishonest never struck anyone. It is curious how often people, of the strictest probity in other matters, will solemnly declare they have nothing contraband with them, and triumphantly show their smuggled cigars after the frontier is crossed.

We missed the company of the Russian ladies, both of them witty and cultured women. How they fared at their frontier we know not, but we know that they had on plenteous protection against the cold.

The chief excursion from S. Margherita is to Portofino Kulm. A rebellious spirit against "the things" one ought to see had inclined me to put this off, so many places unknown as "the thing" having often given me much greater pleasure. The glowing account given of it by the Russian ladies induced me and my German artist friend to go and see it. The excursion can be done in an afternoon, by a motor which, weather permitting, starts from Rapallo, picks up passengers at S. Margherita, then crosses three-quarters of the promontory in a continuous ascent till it reaches Ruta. Here we enter on a private road belonging to Portofino Kulm hotel, and after zigzagging for four miles up the slopes of the mountain we end our journey. As an hotel this establishment is used only in summer; but it is open, during

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the winter season, for day excursionists from the neighbouring sea-side places.

The extensive panorama of the eastern and western Rivieras to the right and left of us was only surpassed in grandeur by the ranges of snow-covered mountains behind us. To the west of the promontory we looked down on the villages of S. Nicola, Mortola, and S. Rocco; no other signs of human activity were visible on this bleak and harbourless coast. Camogli with its quaint little harbour lies in the angle where the Portofino promontory starts from the mainland. Then Recco, Sori, Bogliasco, and Nervi lead the eye to the amphitheatre-like Genoa-so clear and so distinct on that day that it seemed impossible fifteen miles could separate us. Beyond, in the sweep of the Riviera di Ponente, every inlet had its town or village and every promontory its ruined castle. Savona was clearly visible, then Vado, Spotorno, and the towers of Noli. mountains around Albengo and Alassio were slightly darker blue than the sea and a shade more purple than the sky.

On the east side Chiavari seemed at our feet; the hills above Sestri Levante and the bolder outline of Monterosso led the eye along the Eastern Riviera till it ends abruptly at the classic Portovenere.

By climbing the Monte Semaforo due south of us, and some 600 feet higher, we get from this vantage-ground (2,000 feet above sea-level) a fine view of the Island of Corsica. A very clear day should be chosen

# SOME OF THE HUMOURS OF HOTEL LIFE

for this, for if not the climb will have been taken in vain. By a tortuous and very steep path a descent can be made in a couple of hours to S. Fruttuoso.

We quitted the motor at Ruta, on our return, partly because it was very cold, and partly to go back by another route. We kept to the high road for a couple of miles, and enjoyed the beautiful views across the Val Christi. At a turning in the road, and looking eastward, the village of S. Lorenzo, with its pretty campanile and a fine cluster of cypresses, is outlined against the sea and purple hills stretching away to Portovenere. The church contains an interesting triptych attributed to Memling; on it is inscribed: "Andreas de Costa fecit fieri Bruges 1499." It was, however, too dark to enable us to judge of its merits. The Aurelian Way meets the high road at S. Lorenzo, after which its traces are lost till they are picked up again on the coast west of the promontory."

Shortly after leaving S. Lorenzo we took the path which winds through olive groves and terraced homesteads till it descends to S. Siro, a suburb of S. Margherita.

The saint after whom both the village and its church are called was a once famous bishop of Genoa. He is held in much veneration by the fisher-folk on the Ligurian coast, and he is said to have a wonderful control over the winds and waves. He is always

<sup>\*</sup>It doubtless passed through Ruta, this name being formerly Rua, Ang. road.

represented with a blackbird in his hand, for the legend is that when a boy he miraculously restored a dead blackbird to life. Whether this be so or not, he did the species a good turn, for these birds have ever since been allowed to build their nests and rear their young unmolested in the precincts of all the churches bearing the saint's name. But for this they might have been extinct, for the Latin races seem to regard most birds as their natural enemies. Hardly do we hear the twitter of a songster than the report of a gun makes us aware that a *cacciatore* is after it. Were cartridges cheaper, few birds except stuffed specimens would be seen in Italy, or France either, for that matter. A French winegrower remarked to me that were it not for this cursed mania for destroying birds, millions might have been saved in the attempts to stamp out phylloxera.

There is one bird I trust we may never see in Italy except stuffed or in an aviary, and that is that discordbreeding bird, the gay and foolish pheasant. We may wander now at will in the country-side, providing we injure no crops; but once the breeding of pheasants becomes general, as with us, then good-bye to many a delightful walk which we can now enjoy. Country folk at home are not by nature more surly than in Italy, and would not, in all probability, turn people off their property, were it not from fear lest the game should be Besides this, Italy has quite enough disturbed. criminals without adding thousands of poachers to the Imagine any military manœuvres in France numbers.

# SOME OF THE HUMOURS OF HOTEL LIFE

or Italy being impeded by a game preserve being put "out of bounds," as has been done not unfrequently in England!

I would, nevertheless, rather hear the birds singing, as with us, in spite of the inharmonious call of the pheasant. Let us drop our mite in S. Siro's shrine to help to keep his memory green.

The streams that trickle down the slopes of Monte Ruta feed the Serrone, which flows in a straight course from S. Siro to the harbour of S. Margherita. Between these two places a reforming *Sindaco* has tunnelled the river so as to widen the Corso Umberto, at present a boulevard a mile in length. It is doubtful whether the pleasure of destroying so picturesque an approach to the town was worth the expense it entailed.

The excellent little guide-book, "Rapallo: Past and Present," gives us careful instructions how to reach places of interest away from the high roads, which are few and far between; a pedestrian might be easily benighted on this mountainous promontory had he not this guide in his pocket to put him straight.

#### CHAPTER VII

CAMOGLI AND ITS PATRON SAINTS, AND THE SANTO

QUADRO OF MONTALLEGRO

INCERELY as I hoped that Camogli might never become a "resort" and break out in Hôtels Splendide " and " Majestic," I nevertheless regretted that there seemed no possible place to put up I know of no other town as picturesque on the Riviera di Levante. My Baedeker sums it up: "Camogli (inn, plain) on the coast, to the right, whence another ascent to the promontory begins." So little of it is seen from the railway that most people would pass it without giving it another thought. My attention was attracted to it in an unexpected way by a fellow passenger in the train which took us from Genoa to S. Margherita. He was a sea-faring Englishman who hailed from Cardiff, and having a few days of leisure before sailing from Genoa, he was going to spend them with Italian friends at Camogli. Now a British sailor speaking Italian, and looking forward to a stay in an Italian household, is surprising; but I was still more

# CAMOGLI AND ITS PATRON SAINTS

surprised when he told me that Camogli was a very picturesque place. I wondered what his ideas of the picturesque could be. I asked if there was a Marine parade and an iron pier. "No, none of that kind of thing," he answered, "but were I an artist there are lots of things there I should like to paint."

I have been so often disappointed with places recommended to me as being picturesque, that I decided to have his opinion confirmed before venturing on the inn described as "plain" by Baedeker. The man, however, interested me, and I asked him how it was that he knew Camogli so well. He told me the place had a harbour large enough to take a good-sized collier, and that he had often been there as engineer on one of them. He described to me how the harbour was partly enclosed by a spit of land with the old church and castle on it; he spoke of the ship-building yards and the steep and narrow streets leading to them, of the overshot mills worked by the little river which winds down from the mountains. And before he wished me good-bye at Camogli station I felt I wanted little confirmation as to the pictorial qualities of the place. Ten minutes in the smokiest tunnel I have ever struck, even in Italy, then brought me to S. Margherita.

People at the Kaiserhof who knew the coast summed up Camogli as a dirty hole with nothing interesting about it. When I discovered what they found interesting I decided to go and see Camogli for myself. Risking the danger of peppering this book with superlatives,

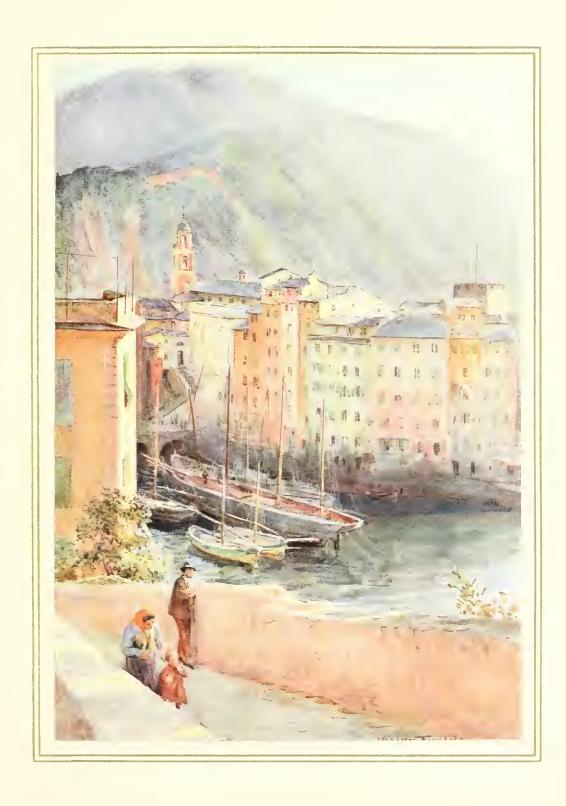
I put Camogli down as the most picturesque port on this coast. I sought in vain for the inn described "plain" by Baedeker. I saw the word "Hotel," with the letters nearly washed off, and a mattress airing on the balcony, and thinking that was plain enough I made inquiries in the butcher's shop on the ground floor. I was informed that the house had been an inn years gone by, and that there was nothing of the kind there now. Possibly I might get a bed at the café near the station, was suggested. I looked in at the café, and found it such a dirty place, with such a noisy crowd of customers, that I made no inquiries about the bed, doubting as to who or what might share it with me.

Now Camogli is a larger place than S. Margherita, it has a busy little harbour, and a certain look of prosperity in its long main street; and yet this seemed to be all the accommodation for a stranger. I soon felt satisfied that it will never become a winter resort, for, being on the exposed side of the promontory, the wind was very much keener than at S. Margherita or Rapallo.

The little harbour, as seen from the upper part of the town, with the promontory of Portofino looming above its church and castle, was all and more than the sailorman had given me to expect. The mountain was looking its very best: indescribable blues and purples in the shades with subtle warm lights where the sun struck its bold projections—the despair of any painter; and should, God willing, a fraction of its beauty be rendered

The Harbour at Camogli

The Harbour at Camog.1





# CAMOGLI AND ITS PATRON SAINTS

by brush and palette, it may still remain the despair of him who has the reproduction.

Every wind, except a warm one, seemed to catch the place where I sat; so I had to give it up, trusting that a warmer day might not "unrobe the mountain of its purple hue."

I came here during more congenial weather, half suffocated each time by the smoke in the tunnel traversing the promontory; but the mountain had doffed its winter garb, and pearly greys and greens replaced the richer colouring.

Everything about Camogli suggested history, but it seems to have been as much neglected by the historian as by the hotel company promoter. I have seldom found its name mentioned except as being the limit of a diocese or of some jurisdiction. The stories, however, of these Riviera ports all tell the same tale of tyranny, pillage, and arson; of being harassed alternately by Saracens, Pisans, and Venetians, by Spaniards and Frenchmen; and, when not united against the common enemy, the scene of faction fights between Guelfs and Ghibellines, the Bianchi and the Neri.

The churches preserve the histories of each local saint, and these and the legends which surround them make a pleasant change from the monotonous tale of murder and bloodshed. The campanile, seen in this illustration as well as in the frontispiece, is that of the church of S. Michele. But although the principal church is dedicated to St. Michael, S. Prospero is the

patron saint of the town. He was bishop of Tarragona at the beginning of the fifth century, and fled from Spain during the persecutions of the Christian population by the Vandals. This was in 409, the same year that S. Giorgio with other disciples of S. Fruttuoso conveyed the ashes of the latter to the shrine now called after him, and to which we have referred. Prospero, unlike these others, travelled by land, keeping along the coast, intent on finding his way to Rome. Having passed Ruta the lay down to rest by the side of the Aurelian Way, using a stone for a pillow, and while he lay there, supposedly asleep, the bells of Recco, Camogli, and S. Margherita began to ring without any human aid. The people in consternation sought, far and near, the cause of such a miracle, and, on finding the pilgrim lying on the wayside, they discovered that he was dead; and also that the stone, on which he had rested his cheek, had become soft as a pillow and bore the impress of the pilgrim's profile.

No one but a saint could have died with these attending miracles, and each of the parishes, whose bells had rung, disputed the right to the body. To prevent bloodshed it was decided to tie the deceased pilgrim on to the back of a mare, and to allow it to stray, with its precious burden, in whatever direction it chose. Whereupon the mare took the steep track down to the sea and rested at Camogli. Prospero was in due course canonized, and to this day his relics are venerated by the pious Camoglesi.

### CAMOGLI AND ITS PATRON SAINTS

The S. Giorgio mentioned above must not be confused with St. George of Cappadocia. The little church on the summit of the headland overlooking Portofino harbour was erected in honour of the Spanish saint, who had spent the rest of his days there. But we are told that after the first crusade some ashes of St. George, the patron saint of England as well as of the Genoese Republic, were brought to Portofino from Palestine and enshrined in the existing church of his name. Rather hard on the lesser saint. And on St. George's Day these ashes are borne in procession round the village, though some folks still maintain them to be the relics of the Spaniard.

Ruta, in its church of S. Michele, also has the relics of one of the Spanish Christians who fled to Italy during the persecutions by the Vandals. They are of a S. Giovanni; of his claims to sanctity we are told little beyond his having lived as a hermit on the hills of Portofino and that he died young.

Before we leave this immediate neighbourhood some mention of the famous sanctuary of Montallegro should be made. It is held in as high veneration, on this coast, as is the earlier one of Loreto on the Adriatic. The two have this in common, that they both commemorate an act of Divine favour shown to Italy at the expense of other Christian people. According to the faithful, the history of the miracle of Montallegro is as follows: Giovanni Chichizola, a pious and Godfearing peasant, was returning to his village of Canevale

after a long tramp from Genoa, where he had been to sell his wares. Weary and footsore, he lay down to rest on the crest of Montallegro, before descending to his home in the adjacent valley, now known as the Valle di Fontanabuona. He was awakened from his sleep by the Virgin Mary calling him by name, and so startled was he at this glorious apparition that he fainted. On his recovering the Madonna addressed him in these words: "Look up, my Giovanni, and fear naught. She whom you behold is the mother of God. Return as far as Rapallo and tell the people of my appearance to you on this hill, and that I leave to them, as a token of my love, this picture which, by the ministry of angels, has been transported from Greece."

The Virgin Mary then disappeared, leaving Giovanni prostrate on the ground. He saw the picture, but dare not touch it. Other peasants arriving, he told them his wondrous story. None, however, daring to remove the picture, one or two decided to keep guard over it while Giovanni and another returned to Rapallo to tell the parish priest.

On hearing the news, the Archiprete, Giacopo Fieschi, followed by a multitude, ascended the hill where the miraculous picture lay. As if more evidence were needed of the truth of Giovanni's account, they beheld a stream of water trickling from the bare rock on which the Blessed Virgin had stood.

All then returned to Rapallo, the priest reverently carrying the sacred treasure. He placed it that night in

# CAMOGLI AND ITS PATRON SAINTS

the sacristy with the intention of exposing it on the high altar in the morning.

The next day all the inhabitants flocked to the church, save a few who had climbed Montallegro to visit the spot where the Madonna had appeared, and to drink of the miraculous spring.

But imagine the consternation of Don Giacopo Fieschi and that of his flock when it was announced that the picture had gone! The search was still proceeding when some of those who had climbed the mountain returned with the tidings that the picture lay on the spot where Giovanni had first seen it.

A solemn procession then wended its way up the mountain, and with every honour due to so sacred an object the miraculous ikon was conveyed once more to the church, and exposed on the high altar. Its stay there was of short duration, for on the following day, July the fourth—and a momentous date in the annals of Rapallo—the picture had once more been miraculously translated to the summit of Montallegro.

The Rapallesi wanted no more proof that on that spot it was ordained the picture should remain. A temporary shrine was built around it, while plans were being got out to build a sanctuary worthy of the mother of God. The whole population lent willing hands to speed the construction, and by July, 1558—one year after the miraculous appearance—the church was solemnly consecrated.

For sixteen years the picture remained undisturbed in

its gorgeous setting; thousands of pilgrims came from all parts to be healed at the miraculous spring and to offer up prayers of thanksgiving in the sanctuary.

Amongst these pilgrims came some Greek sailors who had been saved from shipwreck off Rapallo while on a voyage from Ragusa, on the Dalmatian coast, to Genoa. The picture was recognized by them as being the one which, sixteen years previously, had mysteriously disappeared from the shrine it adorned in their port; they claimed its possession, which, needless to say, the Rapallesi indignantly refused.

The sacred ikon then became an object of litigation; the sailors brought their case before the high court at Genoa, where it was finally decided that the picture was to be returned to Ragusa. Amidst the lamentations and curses of the native population the sailors conveyed their lost treasure to their ship, and set sail for the Adriatic. We may imagine the joy of these sailors in the anticipation of their reward, temporal as well as spiritual; it was, however, of short duration, for on the following day the picture was gone.

On the ceiling of the recently restored sanctuary we are shown how the picture was conveyed by angels to its predestined resting-place.

The Santo Quadro is an early Byzantine ikon (needless to say, attributed to St. Luke) representing the "blessed sleep" of the Virgin Mary. Saints and apostles surround the bier on which she lay, and three aureoled figures in the background depict the three persons of the

# CAMOGLI AND ITS PATRON SAINTS

Holy Trinity; a tiny figure on the side symbolizes the soul of the Virgin. Across the panel we can trace the letters  $\Theta \epsilon 070 \% 05$ , the Mother of God.

The subject is more easily discerned on the numerous copies which adorn the private shrines in Rapallo. The hallowed spot on which it now rests is so overladen with precious gifts that little of the sacred ikon is discernible.

The holy well can be seen next to the high altar. Silver arms and legs and rejected crutches bear testimony to the healing power of the water.

We are told that in 1625 the spring turned the colour of blood. That was when Carlo Emanuele I., Duke of Savoy, was advancing with his army on Genoa. The people then flocked in their thousands to Montallegro to implore the Madonna to avert the impending danger to the Republic. The attempt on Genoa failed, and the water resumed its natural colour.

The festival of the Madonna di Montallegro is held during the first three days of July. A regatta takes place on the Bay of Rapallo, and illuminated boats are rowed in procession after dark; a quaint feature is the thousands of small paper boats, each carrying a lighted taper, which are set afloat on the water. The festa ends with a solemn procession round the town and the necessary display of fireworks at night.

Besides the faithful, who still climb the 2,000 feet to do honour to the Madonna di Montallegro, the place attracts an increasing number of the profane, for the

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view from it is, if possible, more beautiful than that obtained from Portofino Kulm, and after a long stay in this district there is an enhanced pleasure in retracing the walks and the places visited on the famous promontory lying at our feet.

#### CHAPTER VIII

SESTRI LEVANTE, LE CINQUE TERRE AND PORTOVENERE

A LTHOUGH Sestri Levante be barely a dozen miles from S. Margherita I seemed to have dropped into another world. The Hôtel Miramare, where I stopped, is a genuine old Italian house and entirely run by Italian people. This, some may say, is a doubtful advantage, and, true enough, their doubts are only too often justified. But if they feel, as I do, that they are only half in Italy when living in an hotel which has nothing characteristic of the country about it, they will prefer a decent Italian Albergo to the character less foreign-run hotel, bethe latter never so luxurious.

A lift, electric lighting, central heating, baths and other things necessary to our comfort were here, without in the least having robbed the place of its Italian character. Its entrance was in a narrow street, which, I confess, had rather a cut-throat look about it on arriving there in the dark. In this respect it was not unlike the entrance to many an Italian palazzo; but once inside,

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everything looked cheery and hospitable. The main façade overlooked the sea, the waves splashing against its terrace. The hotel had formerly been a seaside villa, and, as its clientèle had increased, an adjoining house had been made a part of it. About half of the guests were Italian and half English, and where they could make themselves understood the relations between them were very cordial.

It was not until the next morning that I realized how beautifully situated the place is. Tucked in the narrow neck of a small peninsula, it is protected by the latter from the west winds, and it is sheltered from the north and east by a projection of the coast in a southerly direction. I regretted that I had not come here first, for it seemed impossible that the cold winds could find their way into this sheltered bay.

The town lies on the western side of the peninsula, spreads over its low-lying isthmus, and climbs up the hill which was formerly an island. The bay is too shallow for fishing smacks; but makes an excellent harbour for smaller craft, as well as an ideal place for bathing. Crossing the isthmus (a matter of a hundred yards or so) we reach a long level shore where, if rough weather be anticipated, some fifty smacks may be seen, drawn up on to the sands. A marine painter would find endless subjects here. On fine days, though the craft here are fewer in number, each one makes a greater display with its lateen sails spread to dry in the sun. From boat to boat festoons of variegated linen are hung out



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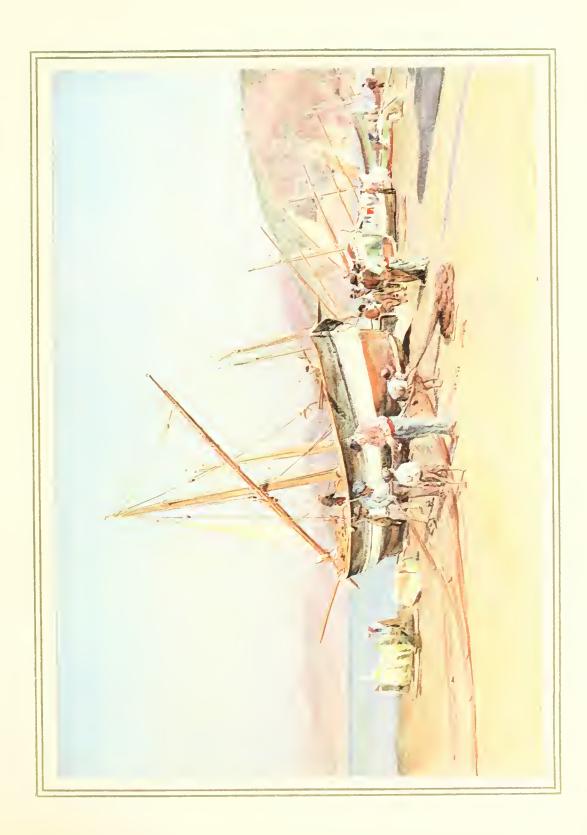
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### SESTRI LEVANTE

to air; fishing nets are being repaired or tanned in steaming cauldrons; men are constructing or repairing their craft, and at a banked-in little brook, which crosses the sands, numbers of women are washing their clothes. In short, all the picturesque properties of an Italian fishing village may be painted and studied here.

Some understanding should be arrived at with the authorities that an artist has as much right to protection as any of the other folk who unmolested ply their trades here. The grown-up people behaved well enough; but the children were often a veritable pest.

I wrote a glowing account to the German artist from whom I had parted at S. Margherita, and this soon brought him and his charming young wife to Sestri. We spent many pleasant days together, either working on the strand, in the gardens of the Villa Piuma or in some of the quaint streets at the back of the town. On off days we would start on an expedition to some inland village, or see some interesting little town on the coast.

There are many of the latter between Sestri and Portovenere where the Riviera may be said to end. The quickest way to go to any of them is by the train which skirts the coast till it reaches Riomaggiore and then turns inland, on its way to Spezia, five miles short of Portovenere. It is, however, an aggravating journey, as one only catches occasional glimpses of one of the most beautiful parts of the coast. Hardly has one opened a window but it has to be quickly closed to prevent

suffocation by the smoke in the tunnels. As much of the line is underground as above it. It is, however, very useful to a pedestrian by enabling him to extend his walks to towns beyond the distance he could do had he also to return by foot on the same day. Thus if he be a good walker he could get to Moneglia during the forenoon, spend an hour or so there, and get to Bonassola towards evening, returning by train to Sestri; or reverse the order should the trains suit him better.

Some of the little towns along the coast are disappointing and others are beyond our expectations, but the views obtained while reaching them can disappoint no one to whom scenery makes an appeal. Levanto is a pleasant little town to spend a day or two in, chiefly because it enables one to visit the five little towns known as the "Cinque Terre" and which do not provide equal accommodation for a traveller.

These five medieval towns are little more than good-sized fishing villages and lie, averaging about two miles apart, in the hollow of a bay, the western end of which is the Punta di Mesco and the eastern Capo Monte Negro. First comes Monterosso; a bright and clean little town of between three and four thousand inhabitants; it has an interesting old church and vestiges of its ancient walls. It is worth while to climb up to the Capuchin convent; there are some interesting pictures in its church, notably a Descent from the Cross attributed to Van Dyck; but it is its surroundings and view of the coast which form its chief attraction. Monterosso is

### SESTRI LEVANTE

famous for its Vino Santo, a wine often mentioned in accounts of bygone banquets.

Vernazza and Corneglia and the intervening strip of coast were much damaged by earthquakes in the fifties and sixties of last century. A terrible landslip at the former place brought down many houses and terraced orchards; huge blocks of rock, now seen in the creek, were precipitated from the heights above. As an agreeable rest, a boat can be hired at Monterosso to take one to Vernazza, thus seeing the rocks with thin semitropical vegetation to a greater advantage.

A beautiful road leads from Corneglia to Manarolo, neither of which places has in itself much of interest to show. But Riomaggiore, the last of the Cinque Terre, makes up for any disappointment an artist may have experienced in the other four townships. It is built on two sides of a gully united by a series of old bridges of varied construction, and is dominated by a medieval castle. What it lacks in cleanliness has its compensations in the picturesque. Should time be available the view from the Madonna di Monte Negro is well worth the half-hour's climb to reach it.

The name, Le Cinque Terre, was given to these five little towns when in medieval times they formed an alliance for self-protection. Having no harbours worth contending for they escaped many of the vicissitudes of the coast towns affording better shelter. Their chief charm lies in the old-world look which they still retain.

Portovenere is some ten miles beyond the last of the

Cinque Terre. It is the extreme limit of the eastern Riviera, that is the point of the promontory which shelters the harbour of Spezia. It would be a painter's paradise were it not for some forts guarding the approaches of what may be regarded as the Woolwich of Italy. The forts do not interfere much with its pictorial capabilities; but should an artist attempt to realize them it is more than likely that a sentry will walk him off to the guard-room, where he will remain until he can prove that he is not a spy. A German artist was tempted to risk it, and not only was he detained for a couple of days, but had his sketches and a number of photographs confiscated.

A temple to Venus is said to have stood on the site of the present dilapidated Gothic church of S. Pietro hence its Roman appellation of Portus Veneris, now softened to Portovenere. It was taken in 1113 by the Genoese, and many of the walls and towers they built still remain. The church of S. Pietro is due to the same Pope who built S. Lorenzo in Genoa, with which, besides its black and white striped marble façade, it has many things in common. The ruins of a yet earlier church are not far off, and are said to have been a favourite haunt of Byron and Shelley. Its beautiful situation and dramatic associations may well have attracted them to it. It was destroyed by Alfonso ot Aragon in 1494 when Charles VIII. of France was on his march to Naples. We are shown the spot where Byron conceived and wrote a part of his "Corsair."

# SESTRI LEVANTE

"Through it the sea-winds ever moan, as if it kept the murmur of the years ' as a sea-shell keeps the sound of the waves," as Dr. Macmillan charmingly puts it.

It was within sight of this spot that Shelley lost his life through the capsizing of his boat. You distant mountains cast their shades on Viareggio's strand where the sea cast up his mortal remains.

He had passed his last summer (that of 1822) at Lerici, in the Gulf of Spezia; his house is almost within hailing distance of one at S. Terenzo, which Byron was occupying at the same time, and whose yacht, the *Bolivar*, found anchorage in the intervening little harbour.

Shelley was in a poor state of health at the time; his nerves were in a shattered condition, and he was subject to hallucinations. In the diary kept by his friend, Captain Williams, we read that while the two friends were strolling on the terrace one night and observing the effect of the moonshine on the waters, Shelley suddenly grasped his companion's arm, and stared steadfastly on the white surf which was breaking on the beach. When asked if he was in pain he only answered by saying: "There it is again; there!" He recovered after a while and declared that he saw, as plainly as he saw Captain Williams, a naked child rising from the sea and clapping its hands in glee, smiling at him. "This," writes Dr. Macmillan, "was on the 6th of May. Two months afterwards the omen was fulfilled."

To ramble about here with a sketch-book as well as

in several other picturesque spots on this fort-ridden promontory would be courting disaster. Let us return to Sestri Levante, where no one more formidable than a small boy is likely to interrupt one's occupation.

A whole day of the smallest boys is, nevertheless, a trying ordeal, and I was glad to find a spot from which they were excluded. This I found in the beautiful grounds of the Villa Piuma. The house is situated on the peninsula, where the town ceases to climb its slopes. It commands a view of the busy strand with a sweep of the coast till it reaches the promontory of Portofino, Lavagna and Chiavari intervening. The gardens near the house are kept in good order; but as one reaches the higher levels, cypress-bordered walks, the ilex groves, and the noble clusters of pines have been allowed to grow as Nature pleases. The grounds extend round two-thirds of the peninsula, the path in places skirting the edge of the precipitous cliffs and circling the Campo Santo upon the highest point of the headland.

The Marchese Piuma kindly allows (when he is not in residence) the visitors to Sestri Levante to make use of his grounds, and as they are equidistant from the two hotels it is a great boon to those who spend part of the winter in either; to artists especially, whether they wish to make studies of the imposing cliffs, of distant views of sea and coast, or of a semi-wild and picturesque Italian garden. There are the remains of an old castle, without which any promontory on this coast would be

In the Villa Piuma, Sestri Levante

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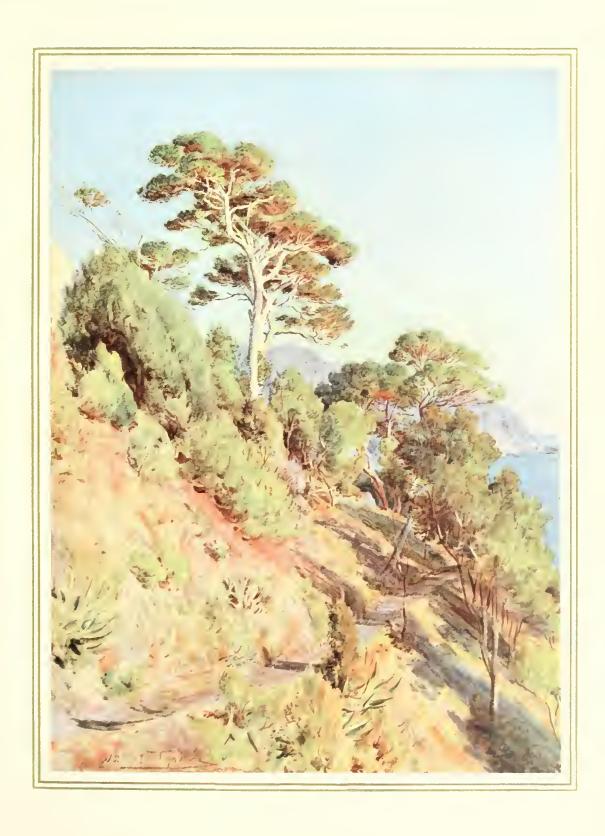
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## SESTRI LEVANTE

incomplete; and adjacent, although just out of the grounds, stands a picturesque twelfth-century little church.

This church had been remodelled in the latter part of the seventeenth century in the worst taste of that period. Its present incumbent, a man of considerable archæological knowledge and good taste, has himself undertaken its restoration. I accompanied him there with considerable misgivings, for even a skilled architect may hopelessly destroy any charm which the rococo builders may have left. I was amazed to see how well the priest had carried out the work, and what is perhaps equally amazing is that he should have been able to collect sufficient money in a neighbourhood neither rich nor lacking in places of worship.

The good padre gave me a great deal of information about Sestri and its neighbourhood; and we also visited together some houses where works of art are to be seen. In most of these the pictures, though not of the first order, seemed hopelessly out of keeping with the poverty-stricken and dilapidated state of the houses they were in. In one case I found old masters in a spacious drawing-room with bits of plaster from its painted ceiling lying on the floor, in the centre of which lay a heap of newly-gathered olives; one had to take care not to slip when stepping on a stray berry. The owner in this case confessed that he would like to sell his pictures so as to enable him to repair his house.

In a much humbler abode, though not in as

dilapidated a state as the last, I was shown amongst others some really fine works of art. The great names to which they were attributed did not in all cases carry conviction; but there was an undoubted canvas by Tintoret, a small panel by Rubens, and two very characteristic works by Tiepolo. The pictures, worthy to adorn a great palace, besides many others of lesser excellence, were crowded on the walls of small rooms, were placed on chairs or stacked in a corner. One might have been prepared for this in the premises of a picture dealer or of an antiquity shop, and a gentleman who accompanied us threw out some hints to the owner that he was prepared to do a deal. We soon saw that he would rather have parted with his skin than with any of his pictures, even though their number made his He is a medical man, rooms almost uninhabitable. practising at Sestri, and, not being the only one there, his struggle for an existence must be a severe one. He had inherited the bulk of the things (much valuable china as well as pictures) and had added to them when favourable opportunities of purchase had come his way. I have met some of those much to be encouraged people in England, who not only had covered every inch of their walls with pictures, but had them also in stacks in the garrets. But these were wealthy people who did not have to deny themselves anything to pursue this hobby; whereas in this case it was pathetic to think of how many comforts this doctor was deprived rather than part with what he had in an embarrassing superfluity.

# SESTRI LEVANTE

The peninsula with its evergreen crown of cypress and stone pines looks its best from the path leading to the Monte Castello. We skirt the shore of the eastern bay, not forgetting to borrow from the landlady of the Miramare a key of the gates of the Villa Mandulla. Having ascended the road and passed through the gates we get a delightful view of the peninsula and of the bay beneath our feet. As we ascend the hill our view extends over the houses on the isthmus and to the reaches of the coast beyond. The isthmus looks from this point more like a house-covered bridge uniting the island to the mainland. A little higher the whole of the Tigullian Gulf comes within our range of sight. And should we continue the path right up to the telegraph station we get a splendid vista of the coast to its promontory of Portovenere.

We can extend our walk by descending to Riva—a dapper fishing village at the head of the next bay—where we can refresh ourselves before returning to Sestri, via S. Bartolomeo and the Via della Chiusa.

The walks inland are much more numerous than the drives, as paths or mule-tracks abound, but metalled roads are few. There is, however, one delightful drive, making an easy day's excursion, which is that to Baracca. The road rises soon after leaving Sestri, and becomes fairly steep after passing Trigoso; then winding through the pine-covered hills we reach the Bracco pass. The scenery there becomes very wild and desolate. Tales are told of banditti who lay here in ambush for

travellers in the days when this was the only high road to Spezia and Rome. But although the banditti are no more the wind can still hold up travellers and make it impossible to drive in the teeth of it. Leaving Bracco behind us we soon see above the road traces of the Aurelian Way supported by arches, and here and there a broken bridge. Four or five miles beyond Bracco we reach the Osteria Baracca, some two thousand feet above sea-level.

The snow-covered Apuan Alps with the bold outlines of the Carrara mountains give us a never-to-be-forgotten panorama.

#### CHAPTER IX

THE MARIONETTE SHOW, AND THE CINEMATOGRAPH
DRAMA

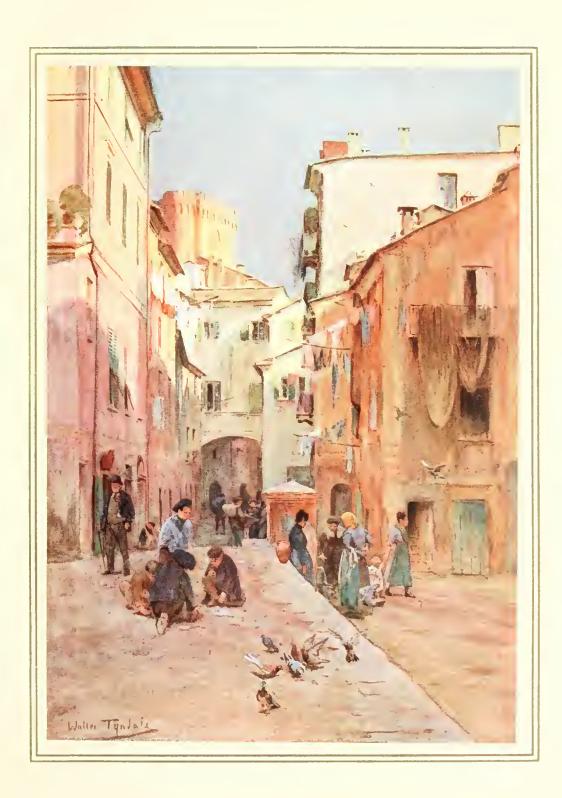
operatic company came to enliven Sestri during my stay; but what was much more diverting was a series of marionette performances given in a booth on the strand. A party of us went one evening to see Roberto il Diavolo. The woman selling the tickets was awestruck when I asked for eight half-franc seats; word was sent round to the proprietor, who deferentially conducted us to the only row of chairs. The other occupants, who seemed on intimate terms with the members of the orchestra, were evidently there as invited guests. The remaining seats were a series of benches reaching back into the deep shades of the booth, and varying in price from twopence-halfpenny to one penny. These were crowded to the uttermost, and I recognized some of the little pests who during the daytime had treated me and my work as a show to be got for nothing. The orchestra was composed of local talent, for I recognized in the

bassoon the cobbler who had soled my boots, and who now nodded to me as a practitioner of a sister art. The clarionette may any day be seen chopping pork into sausage meat, and the big drum daily whips his horse, from the box of his cab, as if to keep his hand in. They certainly earned whatever they were paid, if volume of sound were the chief desideratum, more especially the man who worked that brass instrument which slides in and out; when he turned round to see the effect he produced on the audience the notes seemed to hit one in the face. Considering the scrap lot of musicians, a fairly creditable attempt was made to give us Meyerbeer's overture of *Robert the Devil*.

When the curtain went up we saw four or five puppets seated in a medieval hall, made up of the painted rags which do duty in country theatres for any interior from the Ptolemies to the French Revolution— Louis Seize in this case. The puppets were from two to three feet in height; it was only when a musician stood up and his hat blotted out a whole duke that we realized that they were no higher. The dialogue was in good Italian, the man who pulled the strings changing his voice to suit each performer, and the action, suited to the word, was as real in these puppets as it often is in the case of a live super. The main departure from Scribe's libretto was when the troubadour acted the funny man. They were all funny enough in all conscience; but those not intended to be so were taken au grand sérieux by the audience. It was

La Piazza, Sestri Levante

THE RIVERSA La Piazza, Sestri Letante The same street court countries





evident that the troubadour was to play the chief rôle, for I was able to count eight strings by which his actions were controlled, whereas Roberto himself had no more than five; neither had Roberto a practicable mouth, which from nearness to the stage rather spoilt the illusion, while the funny man could not only work his mouth, but had also an eye he could wink. His jokes were mostly lost on me as he alone spoke in the Ligurian dialect; they were also of a topical nature, and it was perhaps as well that the ladies of our party lost some of them. He had all the tricks of the low comedian; he made his hits admirably, and paused till the audience had laughed itself out so as to lose no point till the noise had subsided. The harp in the orchestra helped him with his guitar obbligati. I felt a certain sympathy for this funny man, who, in spite of his jokes, could not force a smile on his stage auditors; they having no practicable mouths could of course not smile; and everyone being of the bold bad man type, fierce expressions were a stage necessity.

The maiden in distress tickled our party more than the funny man; but we had to suppress our merriment in deference to the other spectators. Snivelly noises behind us made us aware that the maiden's entreaties had struck a sympathetic chord in some of the women. Roberto, the gay deceiver, was as great a stick as many a live tenor, only proving that the man who pulled the strings was a critic as well as an artist.

The ballet was screamingly funny and yet so like the

real thing; the stereotyped smile and straw-coloured hair of the *première danseuse*; her fat legs and white shoes with the toes pointing to the centre of the earth; the light which followed her up and down the stage so that neither twirl nor pirouette be lost, were all there. The ladies who twirled in couples before their alignment with the footlights; their swayings from right to left on hinges somewhere beneath their corsets; their retirement to the upper right and left centres while the star tripped down to make her supreme effort, was such an excellent caricature of the real thing that none of us will ever behold a live ballet with a dry eye.

After more scenes in the ragged splendour of the rococo palace the wicked barons drew lots as to who should carry out some foul conspiracy, followed by deep libations for its success; and the funny man becoming hopelessly drunk, he once more brought down the house, when the curtain came down. The musicians relighted the cigarettes which they had stuck behind their ears while their mouths were otherwise occupied; and these answered with chaff some sarcastic comments from their acquaintances in the pit.

The noise behind the curtain prepared us for an important shift. Four beats from the conductor, and the cigarettes returned to the ears of the musicians. Sepulchral sounds came from the cobbler's bassoon as the curtain rose, and disclosed a Walpurgis night scene. Green lights from the wings added mystery to the rocks, which a current of air causing them to wobble failed to

dispel. A sulphurous smell competed with the tobacco in the auditorium, and the smoke from both sources slowly mixed. As our eyes got accustomed to the subdued light we perceived that the floor of the rocky landscape was paved with grave-stones. The maiden in distress appeared once more, she made her *récitatif* in as good a falsetto as the artist with the strings could produce; then she fell back with a cry of horror, and the grave-stones lifted and yielded up their dead.

Enter Roberto with his suite of bold bad men. Conscience-struck, the hero tries to resuscitate the unconscious maid. The villain of the piece laughs deep and loud, but stops very suddenly when a corpse rises at his feet and tries to drag him back into his grave. The maid recovers from the swoon; is about to have another, on the entrance of a grand lady who is doubtless her rival; but she takes courage at the sight of the troubadour, now got up as Harlequin. The corpses are divided in two camps: the good ones frighten the rival lady off the stage, and the bad ones are laid low by Harlequin's wooden sword. The villain is tripped into an open grave which conveniently closes, and a duet between Harlequin and the maid brings down the curtain.

I was glad to see that the cinematograph had not yet stamped out this peculiarly Italian form of entertainment, though it is a marvel how the people who get them up can live on the poor returns.

The cinematograph was here, as it is in every other

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small town in Italy; it requires very little talent to work it, and is therefore bound to supersede the puppet shows, which require special talents and a long training.

I went on several occasions and generally witnessed the same mawkish dramas which are served out to the uneducated at home. I, however, attended one performance, which, although it had no incidents intended to raise a smile, caused some hilarity amongst the few English who were present beside myself. The drama is called La Vampira—one of the most blood-curdling, hair-stand-on-end bits of nonsense ever put on a film. The scene is laid in England, mostly "nella provincia di Oxford"—the palms, aloes and cactuses giving the true Oxfordshire local colour. The chief characters were the aged Duca di Murray; His Grace's spinster sister, who, it goes without saying, was down as La Marchesa di Murray; an adopted son of the former called Bill, who was also a foster brother of the Duke's grandson and heir called Willy. La Vampira, to all appearance a French lady of the demi-monde, was the ruling spirit of an Indian sect called the Vampires, who practised their diabolical rites in a temple somewhere in the East End of London—Bianca Cappella, let us say. There were also the old family butler called Thompson and his pretty daughter, besides a number of Indians of the Vampire sect, detectives and London policemen—the latter recognizable, of course, by their brass helmets.

The plot was as follows:—The aged Duke made Bill his private secretary, and feeling such an implicit

confidence in his adopted son he gave him power of attorney to sign his cheques and dispose of his property. This young man seemed to have made good use of his powers, for when he was not engaged in secretarial work at the Villa Murray he was having a good time in a luxuriously furnished flat in London. Meanwhile Willy pursued his studies at Oxford.

Bill meets the Vampire at some entertainment and falls a prey to her charms. She soon learns from him what his relations to the Duke are; and to further the power of her sect she induces Bill to make further use of his power of attorney to draw large cheques in her favour. When Bill is next seen at the Villa Murray he fears that his evil doings are not unsuspected by the Marchesa, the Duke's spinster sister. He is also annoved at the marked preference the old lady shows his foster brother. The spell the Vampire has cast over him soon brings him to London again, where in the meantime the scene has shifted to the East End, and we are introduced to a function in the temple of the Indian sect. The priests are sacrificing to Vishnu, while many of the initiated prostrate themselves before the idol. the midst of this ceremony enters La Vampira, no longer the demi-mondaine, but an Indian princess in gorgeous oriental attire. She also prostrates herself before the God, and when the sacrifice is over the high priest makes her swear that she will do everything in her power to forward the work of the sect.

In a flash the scene is shifted to Bill's chambers.

The Vampire in a seductive ball dress is reclining on a lounge next to her victim. She worms out of him every secret of the Murray family; that the Marchesa di Murray is enormously wealthy, and has willed her fortune to her great-nephew, the undergraduate Willy. But should the old lady die intestate before her brother, the Duke, the latter would inherit the whole of her fortune. With some reluctance Bill falls in with her diabolical scheme, namely, to destroy this will, and leave it to her sect to encompass the death of the old lady.

This having been explained on the screen we are transported to the Villa Murray, which has a strong resemblance to the Palazzo Madama at Turin. midnight; but there is sufficient light to allow us to see stealing from behind the monument to the Sardinian army-I am forgetting that we are in "La Provincia di Oxford "-several assassins of the Vampire sect. They scramble up rain-pipes and from shutter to shutter till they reach a certain window. We are in the Marchesa's bedroom before we know where we are, and we see the Indians climbing in. No spot being sacred to the maker of films we see the old lady, in an Italian nightcap, peacefully sleeping in her bed. A slight struggle as she tries to wrench a cloth which is pressed over her mouth and all is over. The Indians disappear through the window, and the scene changes to the passage outside the room. Here we see Thompson (the old butler) with a lighted candle and knocking at the door. Receiving no answer he opens the door, anxious to

ascertain the cause of some noise he had heard in his mistress's room. Horrified at what he sees he is about to leave the room to awaken the household when he meets Bill and some others in the passage.

Some lines are next projected on to the screen explaining that the faithful Thompson is suspected of the crime and put under arrest. The young and literate in the audience read this aloud to the old who either can't read or whose sight is not sufficiently good. Hardly have they time to accomplish this when the letters disappear and we are introduced to the secretary's room. We see Thompson being questioned by an inspector of police, accompanied by two constables, evidently members of the Turin fire brigade. The villainous Bill watches the old servant being led away by the minions of the law. The pretty daughter, Lidia, of whom we have seen very little so far, now rushes in and throws her arms round her father's neck, and has to be dragged off by the police before they lead their captive away.

We hear murmurs in the audience: "La poveretta! Eb la hestia!" the latter, of course, referring to Bill.

After an explanation that Thompson is tried, found guilty of the murder and condemned to death, the film produces what it calls il tribunale di Oxford. This was immense. I felt like an Oxford juryman having a nightmare. The court had frescoed walls and a gorgeously gilded and painted ceiling, also a Renaissance mantelpiece with a bust of Victor Emmanuel surmounted by the arms of Italy. The judge had no wig,

but a head-gear like a top hat with his head stuck through the crown and the brim uppermost. The officials looked like Italian waiters got up for the occasion and the jurymen like ice-cream vendors and organ-grinders in their Sunday-best. The procedure seemed all topsy-turvy, and after the sentence was pronounced Thompson was led off by police dressed up like Napoleon I.

Barely awalened from this nightmare

Barely awakened from this nightmare, I hear the continuation of the drama being read by a young woman to a deafish old lady:—"The Duke of Murray, now paralysed and semi-idiotic, is being induced by Bill to sign a will leaving him all his disposable property." His Grace is enormously aged since the murder of his sister; he is seated, propped up with cushions, and Bill is guiding his hand while he signs a document. I feel a return of the juryman's nightmare as I look at the surroundings of the two personages. The hall in the Oxfordshire mansion gets hopelessly mixed up with one I had seen in a Genoese palazzo.

The screen becomes a blank and down comes a curtain covered with advertisements. For ten minutes we may reflect on the superior merits of So-and-So's vermouth, or the latest thing in oil-presses and wine clarifiers, or the anatomical advantages of parts of ladies' underwear. The spectators discuss the drama, and small boys creep from the penny to the twopenny seats while the caretaker goes out to have a drink.

When the interval is over we are informed on the screen that the Duca di Murray has breathed his last

that Bill and the Vampire have arranged to kidnap Willy, the legitimate heir, and he being disposed of, Bill (for some reason not clearly explained) inherits both the title and the estates, leaving no obstacle to the Vampire becoming the Duchess of Murray.

Act II., Scene I. The exterior of the Palazzo Madama, alias the Oxfordshire ducal mansion. Time midnight. A motor drives up to the entrance, and Willy steps out. Bill meets him at the door. Indians of the Vampire sect creep from behind the palms and aloes and the monument to the Sardinian soldiers, and at a given signal they fall upon the unsuspecting Willy; they gag him and lead him off. Lidia (daughter of the condemned butler) emerges from behind a statue of Cavour and unseen by the others follows them off the stage.

Scene II. A subterranean dungeon with Willy lying on the floor. After going through every action expressive of malediction, anticipated revenge followed by despair, he hears a sound, and sees the door move on its hinges. He prepares to defend himself against the assassins, when lo and behold! in steps Lidia with her finger on her lips.

We are shown that Lidia, having overheard the plot, had tracked the Indians to the dungeon and discovered where the key was kept. In the next scenes we see Lidia leading Willy through underground passages to a room where a meal has been prepared. A short interval and we see a spacious room in the Palazzo Balbi (let

us say), alias the hall of the Oxfordshire mansion, and in it are assembled all the members of the Vampire sect. A mystic marriage of Bill and the Vampire takes place with occult ceremonies due to the occasion.

In a flash we are outside the building once more, and we find a number of carabinieri from Scotland Yard, be it understood, awaiting the signal to storm the mansion. Willy gives this, and the armed myrmidons of the law enter. The final scenes are stupendous. The carabinieri try to seize Bill and the Vampire. A revolver shot bowls one over, and a general scrimmage follows. Indians are shot and clubbed with rifles; lamps are upset, and robes and furniture catch fire; La Vampira gets enveloped in flames and Bill is shot while trying to rescue her; the dais and thrones of the mystical marriage become the bride and bridegroom's funereal pyre. Lidia rushes forward, is received in the arms of Willy, who claims her as his future Duchess, and Thompson, the released butler, appears opportunely to bless the young couple as the curtain descends.

It was indeed a great penn'orth of sensations to those in the pit, and we in the exalted half-franc seats could not complain that we had not had our money's worth. We had possibly not seen greater balderdash than we may find in the numberless cinema shows in England; but we cannot conceive an English company going to the great expense of producing so long a film and yet taking so little pains to give it some verisimilitude. Could we, were the order reversed, palm off on

an audience an English country home as an Italian villa, or English police and firemen as Italian carabinieri and pompieri; substitute our law courts for Italian tribunali; in short, have nothing Italian in a drama laid in that country? Possibly most of the people who attended would not know the difference, as was doubtless the case here. But this film was not produced solely for the delight of humble spectators, it had doubtless been seen by educated people in the larger cities. The absurdity of the plot may have struck many who would be lenient to the incongruities of the scenery. An Italian public is used to an art having older traditions than the art of this country. The pictures it sees are mostly in the churches, and whether the subjects be scriptural or Roman, the dress of the personages and their surroundings are more or less those of the people and the locality familiar to the artists who painted them. As works of art they are none the worse for these anachronisms, and they make a greater appeal to the sympathies of their beholders.

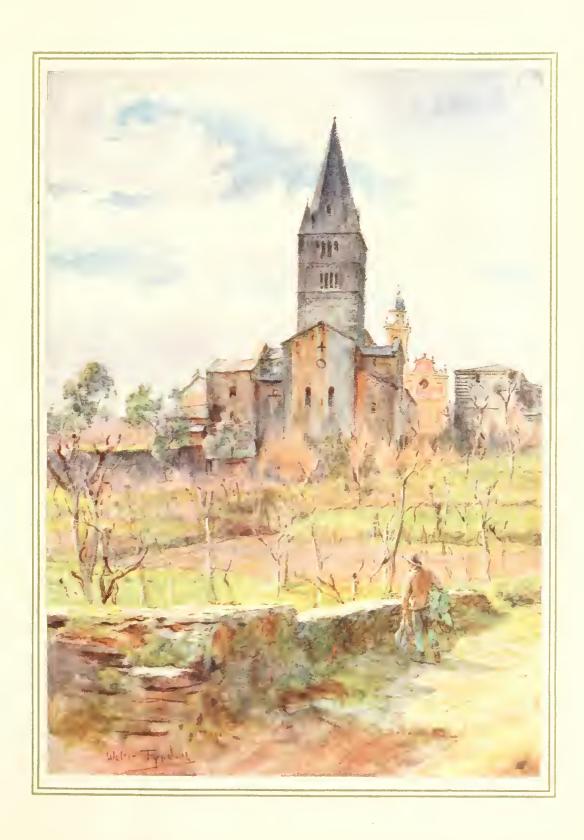
It is, nevertheless, affectation in a modern artist to paint scriptural personages in the dress of the quattrocento. To be true to the spirit of the painters of that great period they should dress them in the costume of to-day; but they would not be true to the spirit of the public for whom they work. I have seen pictures in the Paris Salon of sacred subjects treated this way, and instead of awakening a sense of reverence in the spectators, an apostle in a billycock hat caused roars of

laughter. Such a picture would not please the worshippers in the humblest country village, for although they may know little of the costume of biblical times, they are aware that it was very dissimilar to that of our own.

The humble folk who witnessed this cinematograph show were satisfied that the present period was that of the drama, and the present period, as they knew it, is what they got.



Saitatore





#### CHAPTER X

S. SALVATORE, AND THE ACQUAINTANCE I MADE ON MY JOURNEY TO IT

HE village of S. Salvatore lies about three miles inland from Lavagna III. glimpse of the latter on the journey from S. Margherita, I wished to see more of that place, and also to satisfy the great expectations accounts of S. Salvatore and its church had raised. Tired of wasting much of the short afternoons in waiting for overdue trains, I drove to Lavagna and decided to find my way to S. Salvatore on foot. There is not much left in Lavagna to suggest the antiquity of the town or its stirring history, so I did not lose much time there. There are several roads out of it, which lead inland, though not given on my map; but I have always found the Italians very friendly in giving directions. A long experience has, however, taught me to be careful in choosing my informant. Should you choose a poor loafer, he may stick to you much longer than you want him, in anticipation of a tip. You may also drop on a loafer

who, though respectably dressed, may also stick to you, and leave you in the uncomfortable position of not knowing whether he expects a tip or not. Should you ask a woman and she tells you to turn to the right, you must always ascertain whether she means her right, as she faces you, or that of the way you are going. This difficulty can be overcome by repeating her answer and pointing the way you understand she means; modesty will probably prevent her from accompanying you. She is, however, an untrustworthy guide where complicated directions are required. Possibly the workings of her mind would be more easily grasped by a lady pedestrian than by a mere man. Where there is a choice, I therefore address my questions to a man and choose one who is doing some work he cannot leave, or if he is not there I ask one who is going in the opposite In this instance I was in an empty and direction. shopless street; but presently I met a gentlemanlylooking man and asked him kindly to direct me. He told me that the three ways out of the town all converged shortly into the one road up the valley of the Entella. That was all I wanted to know. I was not, however, to get off as easily as that. "I am not particularly engaged this afternoon," he said, "and I should rather like to have a look at S. Salvatore myself, besides which you might still lose your way before reaching the main road." I pointed to the threatening sky and suggested that as S. Salvatore was three miles off perhaps we had better not attempt the walk. Faint

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hopes arose of being able to shake him off in the town and find my way out by myself. "Should it rain," he answered, "we need go no further than La Maddalena, where we can see the church, and pick up the Chiavari omnibus on its return to Lavagna." This was all so kindly meant that I saw no means of escape without hurting his feelings. We thereupon started on our way.

"I am not a Ligurian," he informed me, "men who have not the manners to help a stranger on his way; I am a Piedmontese, and whatever else we may lack, it is not courtesy to strangers. Yes, they may tell you the way, these Ligurians; but will they take the trouble to see that you find it? Not a bit of it." United as Italy may be politically, the people of the different states, formerly independent of each other, still retain their old prejudices, and do not hesitate to express them. Their characteristics are also very dissimilar. I should not like to say that the Ligurian is bad-mannered; but he is certainly not as courteous as the Tuscan or as most of the people I have met in central Italy. I know too little of the Piedmontese to endorse my companion's unfavourable comparisons.

About a mile from Lavagna we reached La Maddalena. It is a small church which has of late become national property, partly on account of its historical associations and partly that Gothic churches, which were not entirely remodelled in the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries, are comparatively rare in Italy. There is an interesting fourteenth-century fresco on the façade, but not much else to detain one here. A basrelief of a later date represents St. Francis receiving the stigmata, on which there is a figure supposed to represent Dante. The poet had probably been here, for he alludes to the river near by in his "Purgatorio"; but of this later on. The road on to S. Salvatore runs parallel to the river, though not near enough to see it. The low-lying valley, till the hill on which the village stands is reached, is said to have been in Roman times an inlet from the sea, and archæologists mostly agree that the ancient city of Tigullia spread round the head of this inlet.

When once I had made up my mind not to attempt any work at S. Salvatore that afternoon, I was very pleased to have the companionship of the Piedmontese gentleman. He had spent two years in the Congo in the employ of the Belgian Government, where after repeated doses of fever he was obliged to return home; and he was now living at Lavagna to escape the cold winter in Turin. Interesting as his Congo experiences were, that which he told me relating to his own country comes more within the subject of this book.

Like most valleys reclaimed from the sea, this of the Entella is very fertile and cultivated up to the last square inch. Early in February as it was, the garden stuff was as forward as in May at home. The vines were beginning to bud six weeks earlier than they do in the

#### S. SALVATORE

plains of Piedmont, I was told, although the grapes ripen a month earlier in the latter. The milder winters on the Riviera cause this precocity; but once the cold season is passed the greater heat in the plains forces on the grapes to an earlier vintage. The Riviera is as much warmer in winter than Piedmont and most of Lombardy as it is cooler than these places in summer.

The slopes of the hills surrounding this valley are terraced and planted with olive trees; but on nearing the summits the brown stems of chestnut groves were visible. I was told that the further we got inland and the higher the altitudes the more the chestnut supplanted the olive. I asked who could consume this vast amount of edible chestnuts? "We do," was the answer; "but it all goes to Switzerland first and returns here as chocolate." My companion went on to say that it took very little cocoa to flavour a great deal of chestnut paste, and this with the addition of sugar made up the chocolate so largely consumed in Italy. One naturally asks: "Why send these chestnuts to Switzerland instead of employing your own people to turn them into chocolate?" "The high tariff on sugar," is the answer. Sugar being roughly four times as dear in Italy (on account of the duties) as it is in Switzerland or with us, no manufacture of sweetstuffs is possible. It is true that they have to pay on these chestnuts, when they return in the form of chocolate, in proportion to the amount of sugar added to them, so that they would only be paying it at the Swiss frontier instead of in the ports

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where it is usually unloaded. But here is where Switzerland has the advantage; with her cheap sugar she can make cocoa for all the neighbouring countries, and can, therefore, make it in such huge quantities that Italian firms with only home consumption could never compete.

The tax on salt is even more iniquitous than that on Instead of trebling the price it is a hundredfold dearer than with us. It is pitiable to see the poor buying their salt at the tobacconists (the only people who retail it), where it is weighed as if it were some precious drug, while with the sea all around them they could get as much as they needed by distilling the water. Taxes must be collected somehow, might be said; but think of the cost of guarding the whole coast of Italy to prevent a bucket of water being taken out of the sea. I witnessed an example of this one year at S. Remo. A lady in the same hotel as myself had been ordered to take salt-water foot-baths, and as the garden of the hotel went down to the shore, a servant was daily sent to fetch a bucketful of sea-water. He was caught one day by a coastguard who followed him into the hotel and did not leave till he was satisfied that this water was used for no other purpose than to bathe the lady's feet. Poor folk would not have got off so easily, as it would have been difficult to prove to any Italian coastguard that the water was got for so useless a purpose as the washing There are a few places now where fisherfolk of feet. can buy salt at a reduced price, if solely intended for

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salting their fish; but they may have to go so far to fetch it that it often pays them better to let the fish rot and sell it as manure than to put it into salt. Should a cottager turn his pig into bacon, the salting would make it so dear that he would not be able to sell it. Happily the Government now cease to penalize the malaria-stricken in need of quinine. This drug was, owing to the duty, enormously dear a few years ago; but the stupidity of this has been recognized, and now every licensed tobacconist is obliged to retail it at a low price fixed by the Government.

The two last duties had not even the redeeming feature of protecting a native industry, for the whole country is surrounded by salt, and it cannot grow cinchona. My companion, as well as every other educated Italian I have spoken to, was aware of the paralysing effect on all industries by the high duties on most things. "You are happier in England in that respect," was the usual answer. "But what are we to do to raise the money to keep up our Army and Navy? And were we to dismiss the host of men who collect the duties not only on our frontiers, but in every town, we should have some hundreds of thousands of starving men in a state of rebellion." When I told him that a large party in England are clamouring for tariffs his answer was: "Let them come here and see how it works."

We got on to the subject of the Tripoli war. His views were that at all costs Italy could not risk Tripoli

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falling into the hands of any other great Power; and there seems little doubt that this would have been the case had Italy not chosen an opportune moment to establish herself there. I was in Italy during nearly the whole period of that war, and, with few exceptions, I heard nothing but complaints about the waste of millions to acquire tracts of African desert, instead of developing the resources of Italy or lessening the burden of taxes which fall so heavily on the people.

My companion seemed more hopeful about these "tracts of African desert." "They are finding in many places pavements of Roman villas beneath the sand; and where a villa existed there will have been gardens as well as water to make cultivation possible. To sweep off the sand which has invaded the fertile soil must be the next undertaking, and money for that purpose is being voted in Parliament." Let us hope they may find some cheaper way of combating the inroads the desert makes on the cultivation than has been found by the eminent engineers who have attempted this in Egypt.

While discussing these and other matters we reached the head of the valley; and looking back from the higher ground, as we approached S. Salvatore, it was easy to realize that the sea once reached the foot of the hill. Whether we were really on the site of the ancient Tigullia we must leave the archæologists to decide. The medieval S. Salvatore has a charm which I doubt any Roman settlement here ever possessed. It has not

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the extreme poverty-stricken look of the remote villages in the Ligurian mountains, nor yet the signs of bad taste so often associated with newly-acquired prosperity. Its fine Gothic church, on one side of the piazza, is nearly equalled in interest by the medieval Fieschi palace or the other. Immediately opposite is the now disused seventeenth-century parish church with its picturesque dismantled campanile.

The ruined later church standing so near the repaired and now used earlier one required some explanation and this I got later on from the courteous parish priest. When the Fieschi were Counts of Lavagna and alt powerful in this district Sinibaldo Fieschi on his elevation to the papacy under the name of Innocent IV. built, or rather reconstructed, the old church to be used as the private chapel of the Fieschi palace near it. was consecrated in 1252 by his nephew, Cardinal Ottobone Fieschi, afterwards Adrian V. When the interests of the family were transferred to Genoa both the palace and the church fell into disrepair, and in the seventeenth century the people built a parish church of their own; this they used till recent times when the Government undertook to restore the earlier church. And when this was put into proper repair it was made the parish church, and the seventeenth-century one was allowed to fall into its present state of ruin.

The restorations have been carefully executed, and the villagers may well be proud that their present parish church is the finest of the duecento on the whole

Riviera. Its façade is somewhat similar to that of S. Matteo at Genoa; striped in layers of black and white stones, a shallow pointed roof and catch-drip over the porch and a rosette window in the gable, the latter being a very fine example. Simple round-headed windows light the aisles, and similar ones are in the clerestory. The nave looks short for the massive tower at the east end, which is roofed by an octangular spire and four turrets. Two clusters of windows with detached marble shafts are superimposed on the four sides of the tower.

The church would not call for special remark in England, where we have so many good examples of that period; but Gothic is less seen in Italy as most of the early churches were remodelled out of all recognition during the late Renaissance. The interior is simple and dignified and has not been spoilt by over-decoration.

The façade of the palace is also built in alternate layers of black and white stone; a small part of this now remains; but if we step round to the back of the building we get some idea of its former dimensions. Parts are let out in tenements to the poorest people, while the bulk of the interior is used as a storehouse for farm produce.

This village and district suffered terribly after Sinibaldo Fieschi became Pope. His family had been leading Ghibellines, he being specially friendly with the Emperor Frederick II.; but when, after his elevation to the papacy, he threw in his lot with the Guelf party, Frederick singled out his demesne for destruction. The

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emperor not only laid waste the countryside, but dealt havoc in Lavagna and Chiavari. His worst act was the destruction of the bridge of La Maddalena connecting the two towns, and which the Fieschi had built some thirty years previously.

The river now known as the Entella was formerly called the Lavagna, and it is from this river that the Fieschis took their title.

Dante is perhaps as hard on the next Fieschi who ascended the papal throne, for he places Adrian V. amongst the avaricious in the "Purgatorio":

" del tutto avara : Or, come vedi, qui ne son punita."

"Wholly avaricious; now, as thou seest, here am I punished for it." He tells the poet that it was from the fair river between Sestri and Chiavari that the title of his race took its origin:

"Intra Siestri e Chiaveri si adima Una fiumana bella, e del suo nome Lo titol del mio sangue fa sua cima."

In the happy-go-lucky untidiness of this Italian village, it is hard to conjure up the functions it witnessed while the Counts of Lavagna held their court in the dilapidated palace. It is perhaps easier to picture it after the mercenaries of Frederick II. had done their work.

Our reflections were cut short by the threatening look

of the sky; we had barely time to reach the *osteria* at the foot of the hill when the rain came down in torrents. While sampling the white wine of the district I inquired whether there was any place where I could put up, for I looked forward to a week or more of sketching in this romantic village. There was no place nearer than Lavagna, and the hotel there promised as much of the simple life as the greatest simpleton could wish. We will, however, reserve this *albergo* for a future chapter.

The rain ceasing, we picked our way back to Lavagna along the road which had become a shallow ditch. We met groups of peasants returning from the Chiavari market; some to the villages on the road up the valley, and others, less fortunate, who, after reaching Concenti, some eight miles from the coast, would still have hours to tramp before gaining their homes in the mountains. Railroads are few and far between in this part of There are hamlets a day's tramp from the nearest station, and there are many poor peasants who see this station for the first and last time when they leave their homes to seek fortune in America. majority go to the Argentine Republic, and, should their ambitions be realized, some may end their days in one of those atrocious villas we referred to at S. Margherita; the less prosperous may find their way back to their native villages; but the vast majority see Italy no more

There are also districts whose youth emigrate to California, as I discovered later on while in a village

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overlooking this valley. I happened to ask some directions of a poor old woman and was astonished when she remarked in transatlantic accent: "I guess you are a Britisher." She soon dropped into her native language as if that of the wealthier Americans seemed out of place in her poverty-stricken surroundings. had gone to California to join her daughter and son-inlaw; she remained with them some twenty years, during which time she had scraped enough together to pay for a passage back to her native village. The disillusions of a return after a long absence were on her yet. Nothing had changed much in the aspect of her village, though she felt these changes acutely. Most of her contemporaries were gone, and she felt a stranger amongst the newly grown generation. There was nothing now left for her but to eke out a poor existence till her final emigration would give her the rest she needed.

After three hours with the gentleman of whom I had asked my way I bid him good-bye from an omnibus returning to Sestri. The work I had started with the intention of doing was unfulfilled; but I had so enjoyed this man's companionship that I was thankful I had not succeeded in my attempts to shake him off. If he be a fair specimen of the courtesy of the Piedmontese I should like to live in his country.

#### CHAPTER XI

LAVAGNA AND CHIAVARI, AND A WORD CONCERNING
S. SALVATORE

"Intra Siestri e Chiaveri si adima
Una fiumana bella, e del suo nome
Lo titol del mio sangue fa sua cima."

Purgatorio, c. xix.

A SPELL of rain kept me longer at Sestri than I had intended. I made several attempts to get a drawing of the bay we overlooked, and of the peninsula partly enclosing it. I tried it when the whole spit of land told light against a black thundercloud; but when this cloud passed like a shower bath over my head, my washes of colour soon mixed with the streams in their downward course to the sea. Some hours of sunshine, on the following day, produced a tame-looking drawing, unpictorially cut up in its light and shade, and only fit for the waste-paper basket; but my patience was finally rewarded by a couple of afternoons of a fairly steady and becoming effect, and I felt I could sing my Nunc dimittis, unconquered by the peninsula which gives Sestri its charm and character.

To impress the small fry in his hotel, the landlord

La Penisola, Sestri Levante

La Penisola, Sestr Levante

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had hung up many photographs of an important fish he had, two years previously, landed in his net. Needless to say that the hotel omnibus is what the staff figuratively call the net.

I had often wondered how it was that the Grand Hotel Jensch had missed this catch, for that hotel is one of those huge blocks which would look more in place had it been dumped down at Nice instead of on the beach of a small fishing town, where its weight looked as if it would buckle the strip of coast on which it rests. Nevertheless, much as I might prefer the less pretentious Miramare, the Grand Hotel Jensch would be the one any courier would single out for the tourists he accompanied.

The photographs were of no less a personage than the ex-President Roosevelt and of those of his suite. He was seen alighting from the "net," bedecked for the occasion with stars and stripes; in another, the landlord was conducting him into the basket—I mean, the hotel lounge—; he and his party were also shown feeding the monkeys on the terrace, with my little peninsula in the background; and the photograph most in evidence was the leave-taking of the ex-President and our landlord.

It was not until the day after I had left Sestri, and was having more of the simple life than I quite cared for in the Lavagna inn, that my eye caught a heading in a copy of "La Tribuna di Roma," and which was dated from Sestri Levante: "Una vertenza giudiziaria fra due albergatori pel viaggio di Roosevelt in Italia."

That is: A judicial dispute between two hotel-keepers concerning the tour of Roosevelt in Italy. The article is worth translating, and runs as follows: "We have narrated, some time back, in these columns how the last journey of Teodoro Roosevelt in Italy had given rise to lengthy litigation between two hotel-keepers in the

Ligurian Riviera.

Cappellini, proprietor of the Hotel Europe e Miramare of Sestri Levante, having learnt that on the 7th of April, 1910, Mr. Roosevelt would be arriving at Sestri in a motor-car from Spezia, he sent a carriage to meet him on the road; with this carriage went Dr. Prato, the sanitary director of the hotel, as well as the secretary, Signor Kronauer. They met Mr. Roosevelt's car in the Bracco pass, and the secretary, who spoke English, addressed himself to its occupants, and in spite of the fact that Messrs. Cook & Son had engaged rooms at the Hotel Jensch, this secretary managed to bring the ex-President and his party to the Miramare, where they put up for the night.

"Il Signor Federico Jensch was not going to take this lying down; but sued Cappellini in the local court for damages, which damages he was prepared to give to a local charity. The court, however, gave it in favour of their countryman, and Jensch had to pay the costs. The latter then appealed to a higher tribunal at Chiavari and there he won his case, Cappellini having to pay,

besides the damages, the costs of both trials.

"Signor Cappellini in his turn appealed, and the case was after much delay retried at the high court in Turin. Here it went again in favour of his German rival, and mine host of the Miramare had the costs of this far more expensive trial added to what had gone before!"

Whether the photographs still adorn the lounge at the Miramare I cannot say; they may continue to impress the smaller fry drawn in by the hotel net; but would be unpleasant reminders of the big fish which cost the

proprietor so dearly.

I made an early start for Lavagna and left my traps at the station till I saw what accommodation, if any, was to be had. The inn is a rough and tumble kind of place; but I thought I might put up with it until I had got a drawing of S. Salvatore. After I had satisfied the police regulations, which require one to fill in a form stating nationality, age, profession, etc., I was asked by the landlady whether I had come to see to the machinery in a large spinning mill lately put up. She was expecting someone from Huddersfield who had the lively prospect of spending the next six months as her guest. I told her my business, and asked her to put me up some lunch, as I should be spending the whole day at S. Salvatore; meanwhile my traps were brought from the station.

The establishment consisted of the landlady, a fine buxom widow; her son, a youth of eighteen, and a drudge who came in for the day. The inn they had to run was a large rambling place, partly café, partly

restaurant, with bedrooms high up in the adjoining house, which had been ingeniously tacked on. It all centred round the café, and most of the male population of Lavagna centred round this also. It was a large and spacious room, opening on to the piazza, with a counter at the further end, behind which the widow Tagliabue or her son Giuseppe might at all times be seen, preparing small cups of coffee, against a background of "various colours mixed, purple and gold." Whether it was "bottled sunshine" which loaded the shelves, rising tier upon tier to the ceiling, or whether the flasks merely contained coloured water I never ascertained, as I never saw one called for or uncorked. The ones that meant business were large, and their purple and golden contents were stoppered with bits of newspaper. A trailing vine, painted al fresco, bordered the ceiling, and fat little boys flew from cloud to cloud, bringing cups of nectar to the Olympian beings clustered in the centre. Portraits of the reigning family, a picture of Garibaldi at Aspramonte and a fly-marked presentment of Pio Nono decorated the walls.

The odour of coffee and tobacco mixed harmoniously enough with the undercurrent of sawdust, till disturbed by a smell of *fritata*, on the door to the kitchen being opened. The draught, each time a customer entered, would drive this new blend into the restaurant and out through its ill-closing windows. I had time, more than enough, to study the people who frequented this café, as ten days of broken weather kept me in Lavagna before I

could get through the drawing at S. Salvatore, which I began on the day of my arrival.

The Gothic church seen under a clouded sky would give the impression of an English landscape, were it not for the accessories in the foreground. It was a case of making the most of my time between the showers of rain. The road from Lavagna became almost impassable, and when tempted by a clear sky to tramp the three miles of mud separating the village from the town, it was often a case of spending most of the day in the shelter of a shed.

A fair number of Miramare acquaintances turned up here from Sestri on the false promise of a fine day in store. My German friend rattled off an impression on a four-foot canvas during an interval between the showers. Padre Giuseppe, the restorer of his church on the Sestri peninsula, came here also with an expert photographer, and the church was photographed from every side. called on the parroco, and, while sipping his wine, we discussed the Fieschi, their dilapidated palace, and the restoration of the parish church. He told us that the Queen Margherita wished to buy the palace so as to have it restored to some of its former splendour; but its present owners opened their mouths too wide, and may now content themselves with what rent they can squeeze out of the poor people who share its tenancy with the rats.

Had fine weather favoured my stay at Lavagna, I should have remembered this beautifully situated village

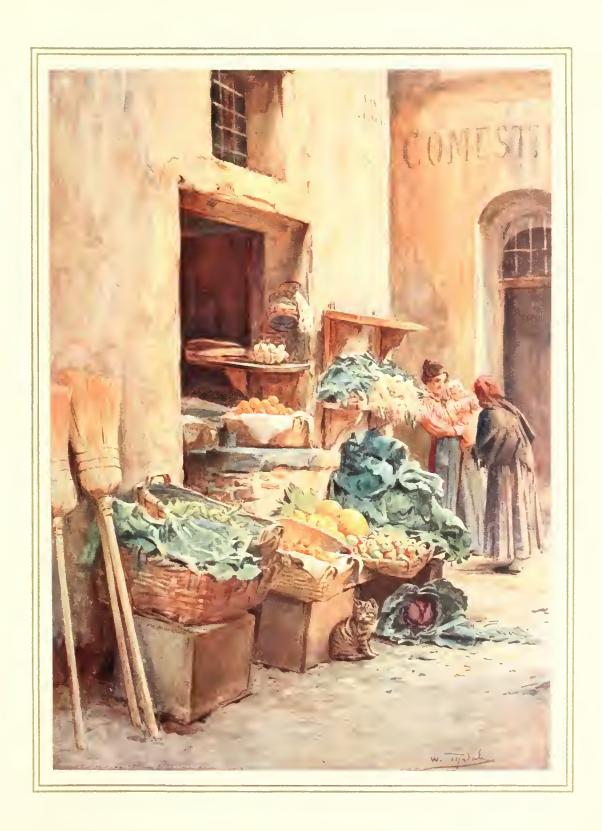
of S. Salvatore as a painter's paradise, instead of a quagmire receiving the soak from its amphitheatre of hills.

Lavagna being only two miles distant from Chiavari, with a good service of omnibuses, the latter place was a great resource on wet days. It is by far the largest town between Genoa and Spezia, and has over 10,000 in-It is much more interesting than I had been given to suppose, its arcaded streets reminding one of Padua—and what a blessing these arcades are! Why every town in Southern Europe has not adopted these seems extraordinary. Their usefulness in rainy weather is apparent to everyone who visits Italy in winter, and to those who have to summer there they are an even greater blessing. The shopman can show his goods without having to screen them from the sun, and his customers can examine them without being half baked on the pave-But beyond their utility what dignity they give to the street: each house supported by arch and column instead of appearing to rest on sheets of plate-glass, as is so often the case. The fear of obstructing too much daylight has prevented its adoption in most northern towns, and in the days of oil lamps this was understandable; but with our present means of illumination the advantages would more than outweigh the objections. Anyhow, I was very thankful for them during the rains of last January, and I know the blessing they were in other towns where I had passed the summer. monotony of a street, such as the rue de Rivoli in Paris, is not felt here, as the arches vary considerably both in

The Green-grocer Shop

I SIVIERA

The Green-grover Shop





height and in structure. Many of the piers have Roman capitals, probably taken from the pre-existing Roman city; some of the arches are pointed and in keeping with four-teenth century details still seen in the lower part of the house. In a few cases where a private residence has a high doorway, the arcading is as high as halfway up the first floor of its neighbour.

There are sufficient open spaces to prevent the sense of stuffiness, narrow arcaded streets might give, and in them the churches and municipal buildings are seen to better advantage; but it is not, however, to Chiavari that we should come to study these. An imposing castle crowns a hill rising abruptly at the south end of the town; and fragments of the old walls descend from it on either side and girdle the greater part of the town.

For some centuries Chiavari was the eastern limit of the Genoese Republic; the Entella, or Lavagna as the river was then called, separated it from the territory of the Counts of Lavagna. It was owing to these often unpleasant neighbours that Chiavari was so strongly fortified. Happily for the Chiavaresi, the Fieschi became Genoese citizens towards the second half of the twelfth century, and renounced their contea of Lavagna soon after, receiving back as fiefs the towns of Lavagna, Sestri Levante and Rivarola. The castle and walls were partly destroyed by Frederick II. and have been allowed since to fall into their present decay.

There seems no doubt of the pre-existing Roman city, to which Pliny alludes as standing at the mouth of the

Nothing now remains of it except, possibly, the capitals used in the existing arcades. The mouth of the river then formed a harbour reaching inland as far as the Maddalena bridge, which bridge replaced the medieval one destroyed by Frederick II., and which in its turn had replaced another built by the Romans. The Aurelian Way after crossing the river at that point climbs the hill to the village of Ri, then descends to the rear of the castle, winds along the coast past Zoagli, and at Rapallo it crosses the promontory of Portofino to continue its course along the Western Riviera. Even the name of the Roman city seems lost; Pliny unfortunately does not mention its name when he alludes to it. It must have stood on the higher ground between Chiavari and the hamlet of Ri. Its complete disappearance is hard to account for, although it was devastated in turn by Lombards, Saracens and Nor-Doubtless when the medieval Chiavari rose mans. between it and the sea, its ruins were used as a quarry by the builders. It may of course have only been a small Roman station, placed there to keep the Tigullians in check; but we must leave this to future excavators to determine.

The village of Ri which jerkily crests the hill, a mile inland, must have been a place of some importance before the ninth century, by which time the foundations of Chiavari were already laid. Its large and prosperous neighbour, which it overlooks, is said to owe its name from its being considered the key to Ri. It is translated into Clavarium in medieval times, and a key figures on

its coat of arms. Dante's spelling of the name is Chiaveri instead of the present letter a in the penultimate syllable, which is identical to the present Italian word for a key, chiave, plus the terminal ri. The Chiavaresi will point this out to you, owing to other derivations having been suggested.

The Entella, now spanned by three additional bridges between that of the Maddalena and the sea, was a rushing torrent last January; we could clearly trace the course of its brown waters for some miles in the blue of the Mediterranean. By this time it is probably a wide waste of boulders with no more than a trickle of water down its centre.

Returning from Chiavari one extra wet afternoon, I observed, amongst the crowd of people who had taken shelter in the café, a man who seemed a stranger to these parts. He spoke to no one, ordered nothing, and gazed vacantly at the noisy guests assembled round a card table. I saw him again, later on, in the restaurant, where the waiter was vainly trying to ascertain whether he should bring him a minestrone or pasta al sugo. It then dawned on me that this stranger was probably the mechanic from Huddersfield for whom I had been taken by the landlady on my arrival. I went to his assistance, and shall not easily forget his look of relief on meeting someone whom he could understand, though it was as much as I could do to understand him myself, having been very little in Yorkshire. When he had partaken of minestrone and declared it to be 'not so baad,' we

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came to a tacit understanding that what I might order at future meals Giuseppe would carry ditto to him. This saved the three of us a good deal of trouble.

During the course of a few evenings my ear got accustomed to his Yorkshire accent, and I learned many things about cotton-spinning of which I was as ignorant as he was of painting. When he first told me that his trade was in reality that of card-nailing, I was not sure whether he was a conjuror or a proficient in the three-card trick.

It appears that the Lavagnesi are poor hands at cardnailing, and, from what I could gather, the imported English employees intended them to remain so.

His job was to last him six months, working eleven hours a day without a break except on Sundays and on one or two of the church festivals. He had been allowed to sign on for twelve hours a day with the understanding he would make up the extra hour during the eleven. The English firm who had sent him out were prepared to pay for his wife's journey, should he wish to take her. The attractions of a winter in Huddersfield were, however, too great for her, and she begged to be allowed to remain at home.

Englishmen of a certain class are poor hands at adapting themselves to the ways of continentals, and are slow at acquiring a foreign language. As I expected, he did not appear to like the food; but I thought he might appreciate the unlimited amount of wine supplied gratis with each meal. The wine was excellent, though it

produced no other comment in the Yorkshireman than, "Wouldn't a glass of beer be just foine!" The bad weather increased his home-sickness by reminding him of his native town. I had tried to cheer him up by telling him that this was exceptional weather, and that he would have many more fine days than wet, during his six months of exile; forgetting for the moment that good weather or bad must be a matter of indifference to those who are shut up in a mill the livelong day.

I often recalled this Yorkshireman with his pale, bloodless cheeks doing his eleven daily hours in the unwholesome air of a mill, while I was in the company of countrymen of his, whose only concern was the choice

of entertainment wherewith to kill the time.

There were still some weeks of minestrone and pasta al sugo, of bathless toilet and peasant company, to be got through before even the most modest creature comforts of an English boarding-house would be obtainable. There are well-appointed hotels on a number of the coast towns between Genoa and Alassio; but until the latter is reached these hotels, with few exceptions, only open in the summer, when the Italians go there for the bathing season. The few that do open, in the hopes of attracting some winter guests, were in places which did not particularly attract me. I could think of no spot on the western Riviera nearer to Genoa than Noli. Herr Baedeker dismisses it in two lines, and makes no mention of an inn of any kind. The probabilities were, however, that I should find some accommodation equal to that

which I was leaving, so for Noli I started, catching an early train due at Genoa by ten o'clock. Should this train be fairly punctual I might catch another from Genoa, three quarters of an hour later, and due at Noli before six in the evening.

The distance to traverse is in all sixty-three miles, which these two trains, marked accelerato would enable me to do in eight hours. I was at the Lavagna station half an hour before the train was due, thinking I had allowed plenty of time to get my luggage corded and There were a lot of goods which had to have the regulation leaden seals affixed before the man with the appliances could attend to mine; and for once in the way the train steamed in at its scheduled time. Neither bribe nor entreaty would induce the guard to take my luggage till the seals were affixed. I showed them that my things were safely locked; but it was no good. was either a case of going by a later train and missing the connection at Genoa, or of leaving without my luggage, trusting that it would be sent on later in the day. The booking clerk seemed a decent fellow, and I left it to him to forward my luggage. My confidence was not misplaced, and some time before midnight I was relieved to find my things at the Noli station. The Italians are anxious to attract to their side of the frontier people who winter in the south, and yet they subject them to this annoyance at every station they leave.

The train became more and more packed as we neared Genoa. It was a Monday morning and crowds were

returning to their business after a week-end in the country. The intervals between the tunnels is so short that no one seems inclined to open a window, for should one remain open in some of the tunnels one might fare as badly as a butterfly in a collector's stink-pot. After occasional glimpses of the various places I had lately visited, I was landed half asphyxiated in Genoa station.

The Promise of Spring was in the almond blossom, and the advancing season led me to hope that lengthening days and longer spells of fine weather would enable me to get through more work than in the Riviera di Levante which I was leaving behind me.

END OF PART I

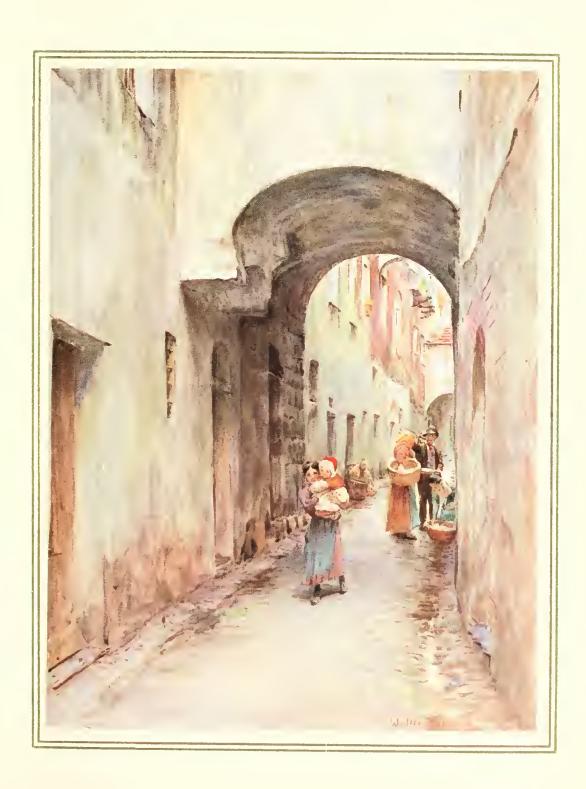


# PART II LA RIVIERA DI PONENTE



A Lane in Noli

A Lane in Noli





#### CHAPTER XII

THE ROAD FROM GENOA TO NOLI; THE ALBERGO PAOLO AND THE BASILICA OF S. PARAGORIO

"Vassi in Sanleo, e discendesi in Noli."

are singularly unattractive; they improve somewhat after we cross the mouth of the Polcevera and reach Cornigliano. But Sestri Ponente, which adjoins it, is as ungainly as the eastern Sestri is beautiful. Pegli is pretty, though it smacks of the suburb, and it contrasts with the rugged picturesqueness of ship-building Prà. After the train has crawled past Voltri the line takes a more southerly direction; and when not in a tunnel we look back on an ever-extending coast. From Arenzano the white amphitheatre of Genoa seemed suspended from its purple backing to float on the deep blue beneath it.

It was one of those days which often take one by complete surprise on the Riviera. Had I spoken to a newcomer on the previous one of the purple mountains and the deep blue sea he would have thought it a cruel

jest. Everything the Mediterranean can give in the way of colour was now lavishly spread before us.

The next stop was at Cogoleto, one of the numerous birthplaces of Christopher Columbus. That famous mariner has been a Godsend to sculptors, as there is not a birthplace that has not its statue; many other places have also statues of him, which is, I fancy, the first stage in birthplace-making.

From Varazze the coast beyond Portofino came into view; I thought I could locate Sestri Levante, the Cinque Terre, and the point of Portovenere floating in a blue mist just a shade deeper than the azure sea.

It was then past one o'clock; seven miles still separated us from Savona. I yearned for the sight of an ugly railway restaurant more than for anything else, for so far there had been no chance of breaking a fast since the cup of coffee and rusk at six o'clock that morning. We got there at last, and all I can then remember of Savona is the excellent *arrosto di vitello* I got at the restaurant.

I had passed there before; but saw nothing to induce a prolonged stay. It is a large and prosperous port, in fact the largest on the hundred miles of coast between Genoa and Nice. Its position, with its harbour protected by a massive fort towering above it, looks imposing from the sea; but its factories and other signs of modern prosperity have almost entirely spoilt its picturesqueness.

A few traces of the medieval town remain, and its

## THE ROAD FROM GENOA TO NOLI

name takes one back to Roman times, during which it was celebrated for the manufacture of soap, a commodity still largely made there.

Let us hope that the soap of this city is of better quality than of two of the three Popes she produced. The first one was Francis della Rovere, who ascended the papal chair as Sixtus IV. in 1471. He is described as only second in wickedness to Alexander VI. Baptista Manteanus, a scholar of that period, in describing him says: "Our churches, priests, altars, sacred rites, our prayers, even heaven and our God, are all purchasable." He was the son of a fisherman, and, ashamed of his family name, he assumed that of della Rovere, and purchased the right to adopt the arms of that family. His blackest crime was his connivance in the Pazzi conspiracy by which Giuliano dei Medici was done to death during the celebration of the Mass; a priest assisting in the work which a paid bravo dared not execute while the sacred elements were being exposed. Owing to his patronage of learning and the fine arts many of his villainies have been glossed over, and he will be chiefly remembered as the builder of the Sistine chapel and the patron of the leading quattrocento artists.

The second Savonese Pope was a nephew of Sixtus, who assumed the title of Julius II. He was as profligate and dissolute as his uncle; but had the redeeming quality of martial bravery. His history reads more like that of a cinquecento *condottiere* than that of the Vicar of Christ. Churchmen were shocked at

his ecclesiastical rule; but as a political ruler few men of his time were his equal. Like his uncle he was a liberal patron of the arts, and it was given to Raphael to immortalize his features.

The last Pope claimed by the Savonesi as one of theirs was no other than the ill-fated Pius VII. He was as gentle and as full of Christian charity as the two others were the reverse. Had he not fallen on the evil days when Napoleon's soldiery were overrunning Italy he might have gone down to posterity as one of the wisest rulers of the papacy of modern times. It is hard to realize that as short a while back as 1804 the Sovereign Pontiff could be compelled to leave Rome and journey to Paris to crown his arch-enemy Emperor. Nine years later he was forced to sign the Concordat, recognizing the annexation of the Papal states to the empire.

After the fall of Napoleon, when his territories were restored to him, he proved himself to be as good a ruler of the temporal power as he was of the spiritual.

After Savona I had nearly the whole train to myself, and could move at will from window to window to enjoy the sea and landscape to the right and left of me. The line is less enclosed on its inland side and we get occasional peeps of distant mountains and village-crested hills.

The classic Vado is now little more than a village on the slope of a hill, topped by the church, and its harbour guarded by an ancient fortress. We round the

## THE ROAD FROM GENOA TO NOLI

Capo di Vado (unfortunately mostly in a tunnel), catch a passing glimpse of the island of Bergeggi; then we circle round the bay of Spotorno, and a bluff surmounted with a tower and walls zigzagging down its sides are the first fragments we see of medieval Noli. We pass through one more tunnel and we are in the station.

So far no fellow passenger could tell me whether this place had an hotel. "There is sure to be some place where a bed and food is obtainable," was all the information I could get. I told the porter to take my hand luggage to the *albergo*, but to my surprise he answered, "Which one?" Not being able to tell him this, we consulted the station master; he recommending Paolo's, to Paolo we went.

The inn has a more sounding title, and its landlord has also a surname; but as I never heard it called by any other than by that of our host's christian name I can only remember it as Paolo's, and should any artist happen to turn over these pages and be tempted to paint Noli and its delightful surroundings I can recommend him to seek the hospitality of Signor Paolo and his obliging helpmate. The inn is on the seafront with only the high road between it and the shore; from under its verandah he can make studies of the boats drawn up on the sands, of fisherfolk drawing in their nets and of the many picturesque incidents associated with a fishing village. He must expect little more than the simple fare of the middle-class Italian;

but as this is well served, and the air of the place generally ensures an appetite, he will have little to complain of.

Paolo is a retired mariner, and reminded me somewhat of Captain Cuttle. His quarter-deck must have been a yard short of his verandah, for in the number of times I saw him walk backwards and forwards he always stopped a yard short of the last supporting pillar. A gaze at the offing preceded every right-about turn. He had served some time on an English ship, and could speak what seafaring men know as water English; but he got lost when we got on to subjects not referring to the sea, and would continue in Italian. His wife and a maid ran the hotel as well as the grocery store occupying the first floor. What Paolo did besides his quarter-deck walk I could never ascertain; judging from the dimensions of his waistcoat it was probably not of an arduous nature.

To bring the hotel more up to date passages had encroached on the size of the bedrooms, so that I could reach mine without passing through those of the other guests; but mine being la stanza principale its original proportions had not been altered, and what rooms were beyond it could only be reached by going through it. I only became aware of this after I had gone to bed. A tapping got mixed up in a dream of lost luggage, and a reception given by the Syndic in my honour, in which I appeared in nothing but my pyjamas; the tapping got louder, and Paolo's voice made so discordant

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a bass to the squeaky treble of the Syndic's wife that it woke me up. Apologies for disturbing me came from the other side of the door, and an explanation that *la Signorina* could not get to her bedroom without passing through mine. Having to figure before these people in pyjamas seemed like a continuation of my dream. There was, however, nothing of the British bread-and-butter miss about *la Signorina*. With a laugh, a "mille grazie" and a "buona notte," she tripped across my room and into hers. The turn of the key in the rusty lock seemed to express: "He may be a very decent old gentleman; but one never can tell."

I soon got to know those of my fellow-guests whose stay was longer than the flying visits of commercial travellers. La Signorina introduced me to the lady friends who joined her here; and Paolo furthered my acquaintance with the men. As a happy family we generally had our meals together under the verandah. The more energetic would often leave the table to assist at the hauling in of the sardine nets, an event of hourly occurrence on the sands we overlooked.

During the first three days our outlook, although the weather was fine, was bounded by the Capo di Noli to our right, and the islet of Bergeggi, just off the headland beyond Spotorno, on our left, with the uninterrupted sea in front. This was satisfying enough; then followed two days of rain which blotted out the coast to within a mile on each side, and sea and sky were one monotonous grey. The heavy downpour had by the next day

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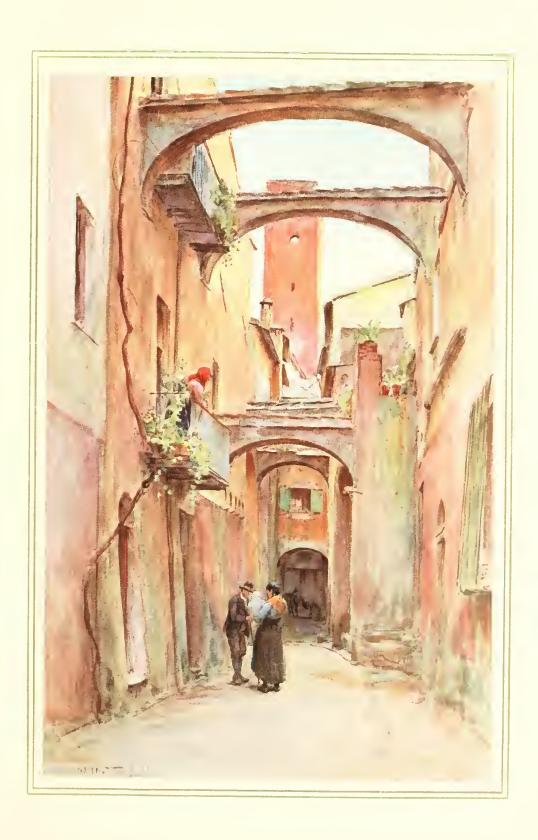
cleared the atmosphere of every mist within range of sight, and the outline of the eastern coast spread across nearly the whole of our horizon. It was a sight to take one's breath away, and also one to cause me no little surprise, for I had not fully realized that since leaving Sestri Levante my course had described nearly half a circle. Noli faces due east, while the coast beyond Genoa curves more and more to a southerly direction; thus the whole of the Gulf of Genoa lay outlined before us with the Carrara mountains and higher Apennine peaks just discernible at the extreme end. Slow-moving cumuli cast deep purple shadows on the Mediterranean, whose waters of an intense blue shot with green had the iridescence of a peacock's breast.

Such days as this cause little surprise later on in the season when fine days are the rule; but winter was not yet over and wet days in winter are not as exceptional on the Riviera as the health-resort advertiser wishes us to believe. I have been there during a long spell of dry weather, which hotel-keepers affected to take as a matter of course; but the piteous complaints of the peasantry and the prayers for rain in the churches were enough to persuade me that the drought was exceptionally severe.

Satisfied as I was with my inn (the name of which, "l'Albergo Italia," comes back to me while I write), I was still more satisfied that Noli had surpassed my expectations. Except for new frontages to some of the houses facing the sea the town has retained its medieval

Via deglo Speddale, Noli

Vi desio sprdda e oii





#### THE ROAD FROM GENOA TO NOLI

character. It has shrunk to little more than a fishing village, though at one time it was of sufficient importance to induce Genoa to seek its alliance. Sixty-three of its towers have gone, nine still remaining to remind us of its former greatness. It could never have covered much more ground than at present, as the houses still extend to within easy reach of its cincture of walls. seventy-two families were of sufficient importance to be allowed to raise a tower above their abodes. The right to do this was at first reserved to the nobility; then, as a means of increasing their fleet, any merchant who equipped a galleon at his own cost was accorded the same privilege. Space for space, San Gimignano delle belle torri could never have shown as many towers as Noli when Dante looked down on it from the heights of Sanleo. "Vassi in Sanleo, e discendesi in Noli" is often quoted as a proof that the divine poet had been here, although that verse in the "Purgatorio" is not positive proof that he did it himself. Better evidence than this may exist of which I am ignorant.

The streets are narrower than at San Gimignano and the houses are tied with flying buttresses forming light overhead arches; but in many other respects they resemble those of the Tuscan hill-town. There is little of interest in the churches, with one noble exception, and that is the ancient basilica of S. Paragorio. It is situated at the west end of the town just outside the walls. It dates from the first half of the ninth century, and was built on the ruins of an older place

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The saint to whom the church is of worship. dedicated was a native of Navalia, by which name Noli was known in Roman times. He served in the legions of Diocletian in Africa and in Corsica; having embraced Christianity he died a martyr to his faith in the island which partly owing to his prowess had been added to the Roman Empire. When Christianity had become the dominant faith in Italy the ashes of the martyr were brought from Corsica and this fane was raised by the Nolesi in honour of their former townsman, whom they made their patron saint. For over three centuries this was the chief place of worship in Noli; but as the population increased a larger and more central church was needed, also one within the protecting walls of the town.

The present cathedral was then built and the shrine of S. Paragorio was neglected and became in course of time half buried in débris. From an archæological point of view this is most fortunate, for had it continued as a place of worship it would doubtless have been remodelled in a baroque period and little of the ninth century would now be visible.

In 1889 the Italian Government made S. Paragorio a national monument. The buried half was excavated, and no labour and expense were spared to restore the basilica to its former state. On the whole, this has been well done, and, as the church has since been used as a place of worship by the people at this end of the town, it is not the soulless structure of many ecclesiastical

## THE ROAD FROM GENOA TO NOLI

buildings, restored merely to preserve a record of the past.

Its present incumbent, Don Luigi Descalzi, canon of Noli Cathedral, is the man of all others worthy to have the care of so precious a monument. He is a learned archæologist and historian, and has given us the result of years of research in the "Storia di Noli" lately published.

"Amor mi mosse che mi fa parlare" is quoted from Dante on the title page of the book, and certainly nothing but love could have induced him to devote so much labour to give us a comprehensive history of a town so little visited. An abridged edition might supply a demand hardly met by a volume of over five hundred pages.

I, for one, owe a debt of gratitude to its author for many pleasant hours spent in getting up the history of a town containing so much to recall its past.

The basilica has a high nave supported by a double row of four arches, and is covered with an open timber roof. It is lighted by four narrow windows in the clerestories and the same number in the two low aisles; it has none in the west end, and from the east we get no other light than from a small cruciform window in the gable and one on each side of the apse. It is, therefore, exceptionally dark even for a church of that period. The choir is raised six steps above the nave, and is shut off by a simple rood screen surmounted by a Byzantine crucifix; its vaulted ceiling is some feet lower than the

roof of the nave, and its floor is raised a foot, a little short of the high altar; the semi-circular apse closes in its east end. The square tower projects from the terminal bay of the south aisle, and probably only dates from the period when the bells were hung. A flight of steps on each side of the one leading to the choir descends to the crypt. One of the most striking features is the white stone pulpit, or gospel ambone, standing at the north-east end of the nave; its rude sculpture and the primitive piers which support it add considerably to the archaic appearance of the interior.

A conspicuous arched and vaulted porch is in front of the doorway, which opens into the north aisle. This covers a part of the former atrium, where the *catecumeni*, or neophytes, were allowed to assemble before baptism admitted them to the church within; it dates from the fifteenth century, by which time the atrium had fallen into complete ruin. Two other interesting excrescences from this side of the church are the vaulted roofs of tombs dating from the thirteenth century.

Placed as the church now is, in an excavated hollow with the road at a considerably higher level, and a high garden wall masking most of the east end, there is no place from which a satisfactory drawing of it can be made; and delightful as is its interior, the want of light makes work there almost an impossibility. But for the architect or archæologist the basilica of S. Paragorio is enough attraction to Noli were there no other objects of interest.

#### CHAPTER XIII

#### THE STORY OF NOLI

VITH the help of Don Luigi Descalzi's "Storia di Noli" I will endeavour to give, in as few words as possible, the circumstances which led to the importance of the town and those which brought about its decline.

Its earlier chroniclers claim that it existed centuries before Rome; but modern research traces it back to the early days of the Roman Republic, when various Ligurian tribes descended from the Apennines and formed colonies on the coast. We trace the names of these tribes in many of the towns on both the Rivieras, the Nabolensi being the one with which we are now concerned.

The difficulties of exchanging commodities with their neighbours, owing to the steep hills which close in this bay, induced them to build boats, and soon timber, skins, wool, and honey were bartered in the neighbouring settlements for wine, oil, and such things as they could not produce themselves. In course of time this

exchange of goods extended along the whole Ligurian coast, and Genoa owing to its position and fine harbour gradually became the central emporium.

Commercial relations with the Carthaginians then followed, and though this increased for a while the prosperity of the maritime tribesmen, it got them involved in the Punic wars. At one time they were punished by the Romans for allowing the Carthaginian galleons to harbour in their ports; and after a lengthy struggle, which ended in forced submission to Rome, they were often at the mercy of Hannibal's legionaries. Genoa suffered even more, as it was taken and sacked by Mago, a younger brother of the Carthaginian general.

At the termination of the second Punic war Rome rebuilt Genoa and made it a port of far greater importance than before. Genoa in turn restored Noli, which remained for some time a Genoese colony; other tribesmen, who had been scattered during the wars, also flocked to the renovated town, which, under the protection of Genoa, became as flourishing a port as its neighbour Albingaunum, the present Albenga.

Ad Navalia, as it was known during the Roman Republic, was used as a naval arsenal, both for repairing and constructing Roman galleons. Its people therefore soon learnt to build larger ships for their own use, wherewith they extended their trade to every port in the Mediterranean.

They fortified their harbour with a castle on Monte Orsini, traces of which are still seen in the medieval

## THE STORY OF NOLI

one which replaced it; and during the third Punic war the town was already in a position to send a contingent of twenty horsemen and sixty foot soldiers to assist the Roman army. Having submitted to Rome sooner than many of its neighbours, Noli received better treatment from its Imperial masters when the whole of Liguria became a Roman province.

Rome, however, dealt leniently with most of these communities, allowing them to remain independent republics in nearly everything except the name; and that mighty undertaking, the Aurelian Way, added enormously to the general prosperity. In return for this as well as its protection Rome exacted tribute and

the supply of a certain number of soldiers.

During the reign of Diocletian Christianity had spread amongst the dwellers of these coast towns, and Christian as well as pagan youths were sent to swell the Roman legions. Amongst the former was an athletic youth of noble parentage named Paragorius, who with his servants, Parteus, Partenoplus and Severinus, enrolled themselves in the Theban legion, then composed entirely of Christians. They remained in Egypt until that legion was sent by Maximian to further his conquests in Gaul.

We are told that the prowess of this Christian contingent aroused the jealousy of the pagan soldiery; and how, at first with promises of reward and then by threats, Maximian endeavoured to make them abjure their faith. Failing in this he ordered every soldier

under pain of death to sacrifice to the gods as a thankoffering for a victory which they had gained; but to
this the Christians would not submit. The general
could not, however, afford to lose the services of so
great a number; he therefore ordered that one in every
ten should be put to death, the victims to be drawn by
lot. Again this measure failed to achieve its object.
Many were then put to torture, others, more fortunate,
managed to escape and took refuge in the Savoy
mountains, and some were deported to Corsica to be
dealt with by the Roman Prætor of that island.

Amongst the latter were Paragorius and his three servants. They were at first well received and, not wishing to lose their services, they were promised promotion and other rewards if only they would abjure their faith. We are then told of the terrible tortures these martyrs underwent for remaining steadfast to their Master and how on the 7th of September, 303, they died for Him in whom they had lived.

Above the high altar in the basilica of S. Paragorio we still see an archaic painting of the Blessed Virgin and Child surrounded by the Nolesi martyrs; one is represented on horseback and holding the standard of the Noli Republic, and in him we recognize the Roman legionary Paragorius, since added to the calendar of saints.

The Reverend Don Luigi Descalzi quotes many authorities who maintain that the seeds of Christianity had been sown on this coast long before the events just

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related. They say that S. Barnabas was not only the Apostle of Albenga, but also of the whole of Liguria; that his work was carried on by S. Sirus, the disciple of S. Peter, and by him ordained Bishop of Pavia; that they were succeeded by SS. Nazarius and his disciple Celsus, the latter a Ligurian patrician. In the second century S. Calimerus, Bishop of Milan, frequently preached the gospel on this coast, and made so many converts that he was accused before the emperor of "having upset the cult of the gods in nearly the whole of Liguria; " for this he was put to death on the 31st of July, 180. In spite of this accusation the cult of the gods was predominant in Liguria until the reign of Constantine, and had far from disappeared a century and a half later when S. Eugenius, Bishop of Carthage, visited Noli.

The progress Noli had made during the first four centuries of the Christian era was checked in the fifth by the invasions of the Barbarians. At first it suffered, with the rest of the coast, the depredations of Alaric, King of the Vandals, to be followed later on by the arrival of the Burgundians, and before they could recover from this Theodoric and his terrible Ostrogoths spread desolation along the whole Riviera.

During the dominion of Alboin, King of the Lombards, some of the maritime towns partially revived —Noli amongst them—but Alboin's reign was of too short duration to effect very much. In 641, when the Lombard throne succeeded to Rotarius, the lot of the

Ligurians was worse than ever. This savage crossed the Apennines with his armed hordes and laid waste the entire coast from the Magra to the Var, that is the whole extent of the two Rivieras. "He left our forbears," says the Reverend Luigi, "nothing but their eyes to weep with."

Except some vestiges embedded in medieval walls, or a few columns in the crypts of the churches, little remains in Liguria to show that it was once a flourishing Roman province.

On the approach of Rotarius and his devastating army many of the Nolesi took to the sea and others sought refuge in the mountains. On their return, after the invaders had passed on to other towns, a smoking mass of ruins was all they found of their former prosperous little city. What we now see of Noli are the remains of the third town built by this people since the last invasion of the Barbarians.

Naulum rose on the ruins of Navalia; and with the growth of modern Italian the name of the ancient naval arsenal grew into the present Noli. A comparative peace, lasting a century and a half, enabled the inhabitants to build a town of even greater importance than that which had been destroyed. Rodoberto, the son and successor of the terrible Rotarius, seems to have been as kind a ruler as his father was cruel, and he helped the people to reconstruct their towns. The Lombard kings, who succeeded him, left the Nolesi to work out their own salvation.

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The eighth century was hardly closed when fresh troubles began. Charlemagne, who had married a daughter of Desiderius, the Lombard king, sent her back to her father because she bore him no children, and afterwards married the Suabian Hildegarde. To avenge himself Desiderius tried to induce the Pope, Adrian I., to crown the sons of Carloman kings of the dominions usurped by their uncle Charlemagne; but on the Pope's refusal the Lombard king laid waste part of the papal territories.

Charlemagne was only too pleased to help the Pope in his extremity, and to have an excuse for extending his dominions. He crossed the Alps with two large armies, overthrew the Lombard kingdom, and annexed the territories of the deposed Desiderius. Noli thus became a part of the Frankish Empire. Twenty-five years after this, namely in 800, Italy was once more flooded with Charlemagne's troops, and on Christmas day of that year, as we all know, Pope Leo III. placed the crown of the Holy Roman Empire on the head of the victorious Frank.

As a part of the resuscitated Roman Empire the inhabitants of the Ligurian coast enjoyed some years of tranquillity till the middle of the ninth century, when their harbours were menaced by the Saracen corsairs. When the latter had secured a foothold at Nice the imminent danger was met by the erection of numerous strongholds, the ruins of which we still see on nearly every headland of the Riviera. The Roman castle on

Monte Orsini was rebuilt, and the still existing cincture of walls was taken in hand by the energetic Nolesi.

During the course of the next two centuries there were few towns on the coast which did not suffer the cruel depredations of the Saracens. Noli never relaxed in strengthening her defences against the pirates as well as against the growing dangers from her immediate neighbours. The nobles raised towers above their houses, and their example was followed by every citizen who equipped a galleon against the common peril. Thus Noli became known by the twelfth century as the city of the seventy-two towers.

Most of these towers were still standing within living memory, only nine now remaining as a record of the patriotism and energy of the former Nolesi. Ignorance and greed have, in recent years, destroyed more than the centuries of vicissitudes to which this town had been subjected.

While they were preparing these defences against the Saracens a romance in the court of Otho I. led to the loss of the independence which Noli had more or less enjoyed since Liguria became a part of the Holy Roman Empire.

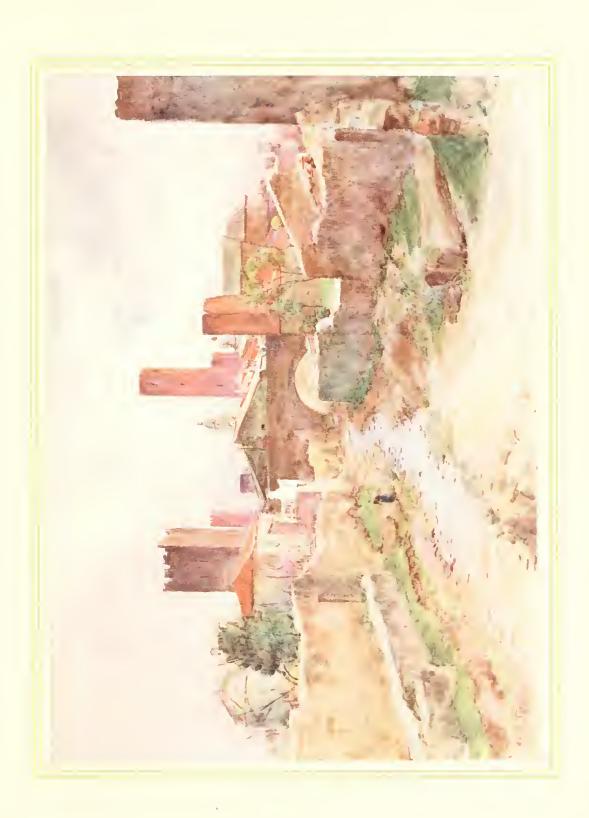
The story as now told is more entertaining than the actual facts when shorn of the details an imaginative people have in the course of ages woven around it. It is as follows:—The Emperor Otho I. had a daughter named Alassia, renowned for her beauty, intelligence and grace of manner; and at his court was a young noble-



Voli United States •

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## THE STORY OF NOLI

man who possessed all the qualities likely to attract this This was Aleramo, son of the Duke of Saxony and a descendant of King Vetechiudo. That these two young people should fall in love with each other seems clearly indicated. But Otho had other projects for the disposal of his daughter's hand. A midnight flight put an end to these, and before it was discovered the young couple had succeeded in getting out of reach of the infuriated parents. For months they wandered amongst the Ligurian mountains, dressed as peasants, and living on the charity of the poor inhabitants, till they found a resting-place in the famous castle of Pietra Ardenna, which stands on the left bank of the Tanaro, a little above the town of Garessio. Aleramo got employment as a charcoal burner, while Alassia tended to his wants, and in course of time to the care of the children.

When the emperor was an old man he discovered the whereabouts of his daughter; and imperial papas, like others, are apt in time to condone the disobedience of a child. He therefore raised the territories of Savona into a marquisate, and bestowed it on Aleramo, who thus became a feudal lord of the Empire.

Though doubting the romantic details of this story, historians are agreed that Aleramo was the son-in-law of Otho I. and was also the first Marquis of Savona. The establishment of numerous marquisates in Italy by the German Emperors awoke the jealousy of most of the cities which had gradually become independent republics. Genoa especially resented it in this instance, and when

the marquisate was in 975 extended to Finalino, which comprised Noli and its territory, the Nolesi looked to Genoa for help to free them from their new masters.

When the people of this coast were not defending their homes against the Saracens they were immersed in the feuds between the Ghibelline overlords and the Guelfic citizens of the free towns. The descendants of Aleramo who ruled in Noli and Finolino after the marquisate was subdivided assumed the title of Del Carretto and retained their hold on Noli till 1090, when, with the assistance of Genoa, the Nolesi were able to free themselves. They once more became a republic under the protection of Genoa, which lasted till 1154, when the bad faith of their ally brought them again under the yoke of a Del Carretto.

Whether they were better off after the expulsion of the Del Carrettos it is hard to say. We are not told that they were harsh masters; but we know that they became fierce neighbours with whom for centuries the Nolesi had to contend. They had them on both their borders, for the Del Carrettos retained Finalino on their west and the marquisate of Savona extended to Monte Orsini, the eastern extremity of their town.

Despite the loss of Noli the power of these marquises increased, for we hear of them at Albenga, and the name of their ancestress is still clearly indicated in Alassio.

Within five years of their dearly-bought freedom the Nolesi were moved by the preaching of Peter the Hermit; and two years later we hear of Noli galleons

### THE STORY OF NOLI

accompanying the Genoese fleet on its way to revictual the crusaders encamped outside Antioch; and through this timely assistance that city was taken.

The fleet then sailed to Myra, on the coast of Lycia, to search for the ashes of St. John the Baptist; and these being found the Genoese with their Nolesi allies set sail to carry their precious burden back to Genoa, where it may be now seen in the chapel of St. John in the Cathedral of S. Lorenzo.

Soon after this the allied fleets of Genoa, Pisa and Venice went to relieve the crusaders, who through the opposition of the Greek Emperor had been cut off from their supplies.

The Pisans were defeated near Crete, and the Venetians fearing to lose their trade with Constantinople refrained from giving battle. It was thus left to the Genoese and their allies from Noli, Savona and Albenga to fight their way through the line of Greek ships so as to reach Jaffa and succour the Christians who lay outside Jerusalem. They arrived there none too soon, for they found the armies of Godfrey of Bouillon and of Raimond of Toulouse in the last stage of despair. With fresh supplies of food and water, as well as material for carrying on a siege, their courage revived, and shortly afterwards the Holy City was taken by assault.

Although Genoa was only too pleased to help Noli to free itself from the Ghibelline marquis towards the end of the eleventh century, and to continue this friendship as long as the Nolesi remained subordinate allies, her

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attitude changed when half a century later her protégé threatened to become a rival. She judged, not without reason, that should Noli once more fall under the dominion of the Del Carretto its freedom-loving people would be a source of weakness rather than of strength to the marquis, and that she had only to abide her time to find an opportunity to annex the entire marquisate. She therefore gave Henry I., known as il Guercio, the then ruling marquis, to understand that she would close one eye while he made an attempt on Noli.

Il Guercio carefully prepared his plans. He collected a sufficient force at the foot of Monte Orsini, and awaited a favourable opportunity to take the castle by surprise. He had lately returned with the Nolesi from Palestine where they had fought in a common cause, so it may be presumed that the townspeople had no reason to suspect his immediate hostility. Be this as it may, the garrison was taken by complete surprise when during the night of August, 1154, il Guercio assaulted the castle. A simultaneous attack on the western side of the town also succeeding, the whole place fell into his hands on the following day. After a vain resistance from those who had taken refuge in their towers the Nolesi made the best terms they could with the enemy, hoping that Genoa would help them to regain their liberty. Genoa proved to be a false friend was soon apparent; for thirty-nine years the little republic ceased to exist, and the freedom the Nolesi were powerless to regain by arms, they gradually obtained by purchase.

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The Del Carretto was too much in need of money to crush a town which promised to add considerably to his revenues. Expeditions to the Holy Land must have sorely taxed his purse, and he was wise enough to encourage rather than kill the goose from whom golden eggs might be expected. Thus we hear that Noli soon prospered more than ever and became a still greater cause of jealousy to Genoa. To interfere with her, then, was more than Genoa dared; Frederick Barbarossa's troops were too near her borders for her to risk his enmity by an act of hostility to the Ghibelline Del Carretto.

The treachery of the Genoese was in Dante's mind when he wrote:

"Ahi, Genovesi, uomini diversi D' ogni costume, e pien d' ogni magagna ; Perchè non siete voi del mondo spersi ?"

One by one the Nolesi bought back the rights and privileges they had lost. Il Guercio's successor even sold them rights in the neighbouring valleys which they had never possessed, and by the year 1193 Noli was once more a free and independent republic; and with the approval of Henry IV., who had succeeded his father of the red beard on the throne of the Holy Roman Empire.

During the following century the history of Noli is chiefly concerned with its quarrels with her neighbour, Savona, who had also freed itself from the Del Carretto and become a republic. To the detriment of the latter

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Noli made a fresh alliance with Genoa and gradually became absorbed into the Genoese Republic.

It is as a medieval town that our interest in Noli is chiefly concerned; it has little to show that it played an important part during the Renaissance, while its modern history is that of its decline to its present insignificance.

#### CHAPTER XIV

THE ISLAND OF BERGEGGI, AND AN ACCOUNT OF S. EUGENIO

F we follow the coast about five miles in a north-easterly direction, skirting the sea-front of Monte Orsini and the sea edge of the bay of Spotorno, we reach the village of Bergeggi, which faces a small islet separated from the mainland by a narrow channel. Having passed this islet on my way from Genoa in the long tunnel beneath the headland I should probably not have seen or heard anything of it but for the excellent "Story of Noli" which Don Luigi Descalzi has given us. The pleasantest way to reach it is to choose a calm day and go from Noli by boat.

The islet is barely a quarter of a mile long in any direction, and is roughly shaped like a truncated pyramid. It is crowned by a massive Roman round tower some thirty to forty feet in diameter and twenty-five feet in height; it has a flat roof and a parapet strengthened with pilasters, and from the centre of the roof starts a square medieval tower now in too ruinous a state to gauge what its height could have been. This structure is

enclosed in a cincture of walls forming in plan a huge triangle, and although of the same period (supposedly of the latter end of the Roman Republic) the walls are in a bad state of repair. On the south of the enclosure, but on a lower level, are the ruins of a large early medieval church and conventual buildings, and further down the hill on the north side we find the ruins of a second church and of what was presumably also a convent.

As a mass these ruins form a picturesque outline against the sky. But their interest is far greater than that of a mere subject for a sketch.

It has never been clearly explained, as far as I know, what could have induced the Romans to build such massive defences on this rock at a period when they had undisputed sway over the whole of that coast. The tower may have been used as a beacon to direct the galleons to the port of Vado about two miles beyond; but why choose that position rather than the Capo di Vado, which seems more clearly indicated as a site? What is still more inexplicable is that no trace of an entrance to the tower is seen anywhere, nor yet to the girdle wall, unless there had been one at the angle which has disappeared. The medieval superstructure on the tower is more easily explained as forming one of the innumerable lot that sprung up as a defence from the Saracen pirates.

When we get to the ruined churches and convents we arrive at a period of which history tells us more.

## THE ISLAND OF BERGEGGI

The Roman tower was in all probability in much the same condition as we now see it when Eugenius, the Bishop of Carthage, chose this rock as a hermitage in which to end his days. Sent in exile to Corsica by the Vandals after they had conquered Northern Africa, he carried on the work of his Master in that island, and, after founding the nucleus of a Christian Church, he escaped to the mainland to complete the work at Vado and Noli which S. Barnabas is said to have begun. His retirement and death (505) in the islet of Bergeggi brought thousands of pilgrims to this rock in the course of the following seven centuries during which the relics of the saint lay here.

That this sterile rock should become a bone of contention, situated as it was at the limits of two bishoprics, is easily imagined; but it was not till the thirteenth

century that it led to actual war.

A shrine was soon erected over the sepulchre of the saint, and was considered a sufficient honour till the close of the tenth century, at which period the islet was included in the diocese of Savona. To further honour the saint and also to safeguard the relics, the Bishop Bernardo enlarged the church and built a monastery adjoining it, which he endowed and presented to the monks of S. Onorato established in the island of Hyères. The monks took possession in 992 and remained till 1252. They were known as followers of Lerinus of the order of St. Benedict, and for two and a half centuries they gave hospitality to the pilgrims who

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flocked to worship at the shrine of the Carthaginian Bishop.

For some reason, not fully explained, this convent was suppressed in 1252, at which time the feuds between the republics of Noli and Savona were at their height. The immediate care of the saint's relics being neglected, the Nolesi seized the opportunity to take them and bring them in triumph to their church of S. Paragorio.

An act of such daring not only lashed the Savonesi to a state of fury, but caused the enmity of all the towns adjacent to the island. The Nolesi were, however, strong enough to guard their sacred treasure till its possession was confirmed to them by a papal bull. Savona received territorial compensation for its loss, and peace was for some time established between the two republics.

S. Paragorius had hitherto been the sole patron saint of Noli, and though he still remains a patron of the town, S. Eugenio is now its "Protettore e Patrono principale."

The present cathedral was raised in his honour; but it was not till 1602 that the marble *arca* containing the relics was solemnly conveyed from the older church to where we now see it—in the Sancta Sanctorum of the Duomo of S. Eugenio.

Robbed of its treasure, the islet of Bergeggi attracted no pilgrims, and its church and convent are now more in ruin than the Roman tower which dates a millennium before their foundations were laid.

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His festival is still kept on the 13th of July, when the peasants descend from their mountain villages and combine reverence for the saint with their annual shopping.

Our ideas of a cathedral close are rudely shocked on viewing this one from a back window of Paolo's hotel. The apse reaches to within three yards of this peephole, and the space between it and some out-buildings to our left is utilized as a chicken-run, while that on the right is choked with packing-cases, bottles and tins. On the eve of a festival the squeals of a pig in its death-struggle add a fresh note to the jingle of the bells in the campanile. A hook and stains in an angle where the apse juts from the choir clearly indicate the spot where this meat offering is hung, little more than the thickness of the wall separating it from the desiccated body of S. Eugenius.

As will be seen from the above, Noli is well off for relics; but besides the ashes of S. Paragorius and the body of S. Eugenius, Noli does not appear to have many other riches. Its people now realize that the recent vandalism which demolished many of its towers also demolished a source of revenue, for had it remained as it was until the middle of last century it would have drawn visitors from all ends of the Riviera.

It is still very interesting, and remarkably picturesque if we leave the sea-frontage and penetrate its narrow streets; but as most visitors see no more than its furbished-up frontage, they shoot past it in their motors,

leaving nothing behind but a cloud of dust. Even in 1887 when the earthquake made such havoc on this coast, and many houses were destroyed or damaged in Noli, the people had not yet learnt to respect and care for their heritage. Sufficient money was subscribed to rebuild and repair their property; but you should see the way in which that money was spent. A beautiful Gothic front had only to show a crack to be a sufficient excuse to smear it over with stucco and to replace its prettily-arched windows with ready-made sashes from Sweden. Hardly-earned money is now being spent to try and undo some of this vandalism of the past.

When we consider the number of tourists who go long excursions to visit towns not nearly as picturesque as this, despite the acts of vandalism, it seems extraordinary to witness the hundreds who fly through it in their cars with only a stop should their petrol have run out. Heaven defend its ever becoming a resort, and its towers turned into *belvederi* to cumbrous hotels; but without such disastrous measures I feel sure that were it better known more visitors would come to see it from the Riviera towns they now affect.

The sole industry at present is fishing or preparing the fish for exportation, sardines being the principal catch in these waters. The season had not commenced when I was there; but it was sufficiently advanced to catch the young fry, to the detriment of what is their chief source of revenue. When I pointed this out to some of them they quite agreed with me; but remarked

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that unless it were forbidden in the whole Mediterranean they had to do the same as the others.

The centre of the line of nets has its meshes covered with a long piece of canvas, and when the two ends are drawn in this canvas is dragged on to the shore and the newly-hatched sardine spawn is collected and carried off to be cured. We reckoned that a pound of this fry would, if allowed to mature, represent the best part of a hundredweight of sardines. The fish were so minute that in a mass they resembled a sleezy and transparent jelly. To cure them, they are boiled and spread out over large sheets to dry in the sun, and are eaten fresh with oil and vinegar. At first they are considered a delicacy; but later on when I saw them hawked in the streets and sold at a penny a pound they became the food of the very poorest. I can't say I found them a delicacy myself, and, for the good of all, I hope the Government may see fit to stop this destructive form of fishing—and France and Spain also if they have not already done so.

From March to October the coral fishing begins by the smacks, equipped for that purpose, at S. Margherita and Rapallo. Though they dredge close to this coast, the Nolesi have little to do with this more than occasionally to provision the boats.

Noli, whose ships were erstwhile familiar in every port in the Mediterranean and whose commerce aroused the jealousy of Genoa, is now dependent on the uncertainties of the sardine harvest.

The struggle for existence must be a hard one; but a feeling of self-respect deters even the poorest from parading their poverty. The narrow streets are kept clean and beggars are few, and the tattered garments often seen in large and busy centres are seldom met with here.

Writers of the past generation allude so frequently to the dirt, smells and beggars in the Italian towns that it may take a long while to remove such a well-established prejudice. There is a rugged untidiness which contrasts with the primness of an English town; but it is an untidiness not necessarily associated with dirt.

Had Dickens written his "Pictures from Italy" to-day he would doubtless have modified some of his remarks. Of the Genoese he says: "Industry has not made them clean, for their habitations are extremely filthy, and their usual occupation on a fine Sunday morning is to sit at their doors hunting in each other's heads." This might still apply to the poorer parts of Naples, but it is quite untrue as to the present state of Genoa and other North Italian towns. He seemed puzzled to reconcile the constant washing of clothes which he observed with the prevalence of dirt, when he says: "The peasant women, with naked feet and legs, are so constantly washing clothes, in the public tanks, and in every stream and ditch, that one cannot help wondering, in the midst of all this dirt, who wears them when they are clean."

The Italians, as a matter of fact, change their linen

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more often than the people of northern countries, and it is not only my experience but that of many others as well, that even in the humblest of inns one can always count on having clean sheets, and where they can afford table-cloths they are generally cleaner than in similar places at home.

#### CHAPTER XV

#### EVENINGS AT NOLI

THE long winter evenings are the only time liable to hang heavily in these quiet towns with their primitive hotels; one soon tires of reading in a straight-backed chair and by a dim light. But here in Noli I was fortunate enough to have fellow-guests whose conversation helped to pass the evenings very pleasantly; and to one in particular I owe a great deal of information concerning the people of this coast. He was a bank manager from Milan who was taking a fortnight's holiday. He had been several times to London, where he had placed a son of his in a bank, and being a man of keen observation his views on things English were entertaining.

I had lately been reading the arguments put forward in favour of obligatory military service at home, one of which was the much-needed discipline of the youth of our country. I was therefore rather surprised on asking my friend what were the things which struck him most in London to be unhesitatingly told that he was

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more impressed with the order and discipline he observed than with anything else. "Far be it from me to belittle the qualities of my countrymen," he said, "but if there is one thing we lack it is discipline." I admitted, as everyone does, that the traffic in our streets is better organized than in most of the other large capitals. The policeman's hand which can stop the stream of vehicles in a City street so as to allow a nursemaid to cross with her perambulator is the admiration of every observant foreigner who visits London. This is, of course, more to the credit of the organization than to the individual intelligence of the police constables.

My friend maintained that in intelligence as well as civility our Bobby can give points to most Continentals of his calling. He declared that the movements of every foreigner in London were known, in spite of their not having to fill in the forms which every guest is obliged to do on putting up at a Continental hotel. As an instance he told me of a fellow-countryman of his who, stranded in Hampstead, appealed to a policeman to direct him to his destination. As the Italian spoke no English and could not pronounce the name of the place he sought, the policeman could not direct him without assistance; he thereupon kept the Italian waiting some ten minutes until he saw my friend's son appearing at the end of the street, when by signs he gave the other to understand that an interpreter was at hand. the young man had never noticed this policeman before, he was surprised to find how well his movements were

known. The Bobby knew that he spoke sufficient English for his purpose, that he was employed in a bank in the City, and that he invariably arrived at West Hampstead station by a train then due. The Italian, who at first resented being detained in the street and was also very much puzzled as to the reason, was enabled to reach his destination, and has ever since had a good word to say for our London police.

The queue of patient Londoners at the pit entrance to a theatre struck my friend as an extraordinary example of the unwritten law and order. That no one tried to secure a place in front of those who had preceded him amazed him—" A state of things unthinkable outside an Italian theatre."

Police and other regulations are not lacking in Italy, and are much more forced on one's notice than at home; but except in serious cases little attention is paid to their enforcement. Our notices such as "Trespassers will be prosecuted," though sometimes fatuous in England, would be a mere waste of paint in Italy; what corresponds to our "No admittance except on business," requires a savage dog to give it weight with an Italian. To stop the boys from climbing the telegraph poles uninviting tenterhooks do not suffice, for besides these we see on every standard a skull and cross-bones with the warning: "Pericolo di Morte."

To discover a flaw in others in those qualities we lack is a human weakness from which the Italian journalist is not exempt. The law-abiding British then being a prey

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to the lawlessness of a small section of their womenkind must have given pleasure to the newspaper-reading public, for "Le Suffragette Inglese" was a heading in every daily journal. It was painful reading for an Englishman, although some of the remedies suggested were amusing.

"Eb che bei bambini si vedono a Londra!" exclaimed my friend on the conversation turning to our little ones. This may well surprise him, for the fine healthy children one sees in London surprise most observant Englishmen who live in the country. It is true that my friend's observations were mostly confined to those he saw in Hampstead and in Regent's Park; but even in the crowded parts of London the children certainly look much healthier than one might anticipate from their surroundings.

The Italians, as well as the other Latin races, might take a lesson from us in regard to the bringing up of their little ones. It is the commonest thing to see quite young children sitting through a long table d'hôte dinner with their parents and eating rich dishes which we should never dream of giving ours. They also join in the conversation, and are seldom put to bed before their elders retire themselves. They are more intelligent than those of a similar age at home; but it is a precocity obtained at the cost of health and stamina. At one hotel a lad of fourteen monopolized the conversation; his views on politics, religion, etc., were listened to and discussed as if he had been a senator. On his parents regretting to me that their son was so delicate they

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seemed surprised when I suggested to them that earlier hours might be more conducive to his health than cigarettes and politics.

Young Italians of the well-to-do classes have begun to imitate our youth in athletic exercises. Many who formerly would have spent their spare time sitting in the cafés and quizzing the young women as they passed now join some or other sporting club, and where water is suitable we may now often see an eight-oar smartly handled. If they succeed in keeping out the professional element, where a few trained athletes encourage a fresh form of betting, this imitation of our youth is all to the good.

I wish we had never set them an example in pigeon shooting; they shoot enough birds, in all conscience, without this fresh encouragement. Always a cruel sport to my mind, it is practised in Italy with some additional cruelties which public opinion would not tolerate in England.

"Il football match," with its gate-money, and excursion trains to bring thousands to watch a game in which they do not participate, is unhappily another institution they are beginning to copy from us.

Amongst the working classes there has been no lack of pastimes of a healthy nature. I have hardly seen a village that has not some bit of level road or open space where the men can play at bowls. It is pretty to watch them on a holiday using their rounded stones as skilfully as many a practised hand on our greens at

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home. The irregularities of the ground necessitate all sorts of calculations absent from a perfect level, and, judging from the excitement of the players, they seem to get as much enjoyment out of these rudely-fashioned bowls as we do at home on the most expensive greens. The alleys not usually being the property of a wine-shop, there is little encouragement to drink; we may therefore put their excitement entirely down to the fun of the game.

In every hotel unmonopolized by tourists there is no charge for the wine supplied at the meals, and, except on very special occasions, I have never seen this abused. I happened on one of these special occasions about this time, and that was the annual conscription. Young peasants came down from the mountain villages to be sent on to Savona as recruits on the following day; it being their last night of liberty they seemed determined to make a night of it. The serious operation of getting outside of a huge minestrone kept them quiet during the first part of their dinner; but the wine ad libitum began to tell during the arrosto, and by the dessert each one talked and gesticulated quite regardless of a listener. An intelligible argument cropped up during the coffee: some who were on billiards intent were arguing as to the end of the table from which the first stroke should be made, one maintaining that it was the mountain end and others the sea end. The landlord being called in to decide—" Verso la montagna" was the verdict.

Towards the mountain or towards the sea is a

common answer when asking directions on this coast, and should our road run parallel to either we get the pretty expression verso il levante or verso il ponente. Our East and West is more poetically rendered by the Italian, the Rising and the Setting.

The young recruits' lapse into intelligibility was of short duration, and when argument gave place to song I thought it time to retire. For hours I heard the refrain of a ditty in which a certain Gioseffina had done something amiss, till sleep made me oblivious of that young lady and her shortcomings.

Two years of military service make up to some extent for the lack of physical exercise of many of the young men in the Latin countries, although in the case of these rustics the service may prove a comparative rest to the hard life they lead to exist in their inhospitable mountains.

Life in Noli passed so pleasantly that I regretted the exigencies of this book which obliged me to move on. Fresh subjects seemed to crowd on me as my stay came to an end. The little town is still busy enough not to give that depression often felt in places that have sunk from a state of importance to the last stages of decay; besides, the coming of spring seems to awaken a new life even in the crumbling walls which form its girdle.

I had packed my traps and strolled verso la montagna to while away a couple of hours before leaving, when a view of the town from the country-side was more than

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any painter could resist. Another twenty-four hours of Noli was clearly indicated; and in a hot sun alternating with cooling showers I was enabled to record something which may show the possibilities of this place as a sketching-ground.

#### CHAPTER XVI

THE HUMOURS OF THE COUNTRY INN; ALBENGA SEEN FROM ITS NARROW STREETS AND FROM ACROSS THE PLAIN

ROM Noli to Oneglia, a distance of thirty-two miles, we traverse the most unsophisticated part of the whole of the Western Riviera. Alassio is the one old town which has been spoilt by the requirements of the foreign visitors it caters for. But Alassio is still a very pleasant place to winter in if one can dispense with the excitements provided in similar places on the French coast. Its chief attraction in my case is its proximity to Albenga. The question now arose whether it were better to rough it in Albenga and be amidst the subjects I wished to paint, or to live in luxury at Alassio and daily drive the four or five miles which separate the two towns. In an ordinary way I should not have hesitated to choose the former; but in this instance I had received letters warning me against the unhealthiness of Albenga. The saying "faccia d' Albenga " was repeated, as well as instances given of people who had never been well since a sojourn there. On the other hand the Italians I asked about it, belittled

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these warnings. I decided therefore to go and see for myself.

It was hard having to pass the triple village of Finalino without even a look around, especially the higher portion known as Finalborgo with its old castle and walls taking one back to the days when Il Guercio, the most redoubtable of the Del Carretto, made short work of the defences of Noli. Borgo Verezzi, Pietraligure, Borghetto S. Spirito followed; each having its special charm and recalling some incident in the stormy history of this forgotten part of the Ligurian coast.

After Ceriole the mountains recede and we enter a fertile plain, the delta of the Centa, which flows under the walls of Albenga. The line runs along the extreme edge of the coast so as not to waste a yard more of this precious land than necessary. Rich soil is so scarce in Liguria that every inch of this is highly cultivated, in violent contrast to the rugged and sterile country we have left.

The arrival at the station is a shock to one's expectations. Happily it is nearly a mile outside the walls of the city, and every form of ugliness that has sprung up around it does not therefore interfere with the old-world dignity within the walled cincture.

The Albergo di Commercio is in a piazza just outside the town; and perhaps this is just as well, for the latest things in drainage do not appear to have troubled the Albenganesi overmuch. The inn itself, having no drains, cannot be accused of having bad ones. It is a ramshackle hostel in which the old part and the new

additions have been jumbled together regardless of plan, with the access of one to the other evidently treated as an afterthought. It was only towards the end of my stay that I could find, without a guide, my way from the general living-room to where I slept. Access to the bedrooms having been overlooked by the architect they were reached by means of a widened cornice with an iron rail to prevent one from falling into the yard. The only shelter in rainy weather was from a similar gangway leading to the rooms on the floor above. Only the thinnest of guests could squeeze past each other; the usual thing was for one to back into the first open door till the other had moved on.

The view from the window was across the open country between the town and the sea. The peach-trees were in full bloom and the rich soil on which they stood was carpeted with luscious green crops before the month was a fortnight older. A few warm days after the heavy rains, and this black and greasy earth was arrayed in all the glories of spring's awakening.

As if to spoil the full enjoyment of the large windows opening this way our host had constructed a fowl-run along the whole side of the bedroom annexe. I kept early hours; but not as early as the cocks and hens. Only one rooster reigned in this run; would that the responsibilities of his vast hareem had silenced his voice! Before the first glimmer of light on the eastern horizon, Chanticleer would begin a conversation with the monarch of a neighbouring run, and both were of that aggravating

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species that must have the last word. Bad as this was, the long days spent in the open air induced enough sleep to make me oblivious to this noise. But worse than the cock-crowing followed when the fresh breezy weather gave place to sultry days. With no intention of making a pun I can only describe the smell as a foul one; and if that were not enough to oblige the windows to be always closed the flies made it imperative.

There were some thirty bedrooms all facing the same way and nearly all occupied, but I seem to have been the only one to feel this discomfort. When I mentioned it to others they only showed surprise at my wishing to keep the windows open. I tried the door instead, risking any intrusions of my fellow boarders; but some stabling on that side was a match for the fowl-run in its fly-breeding capabilities.

To leave now would have been too inconvenient, having begun several drawings which I was anxious to finish, and besides this there were other things which attracted me to this inn. The people were very obliging and took pains to make me as comfortable as their ideas of comfort could soar; the rooms were kept very clean, and the food was wholesome and abundant. And how these people can work when they are put to it! With two maids the landlord and his wife run the whole establishment. On market days they would get eighty or a hundred hungry men to feed, besides having people in and out for refreshment during the whole day. I could hear them astir as early as the first notes of the

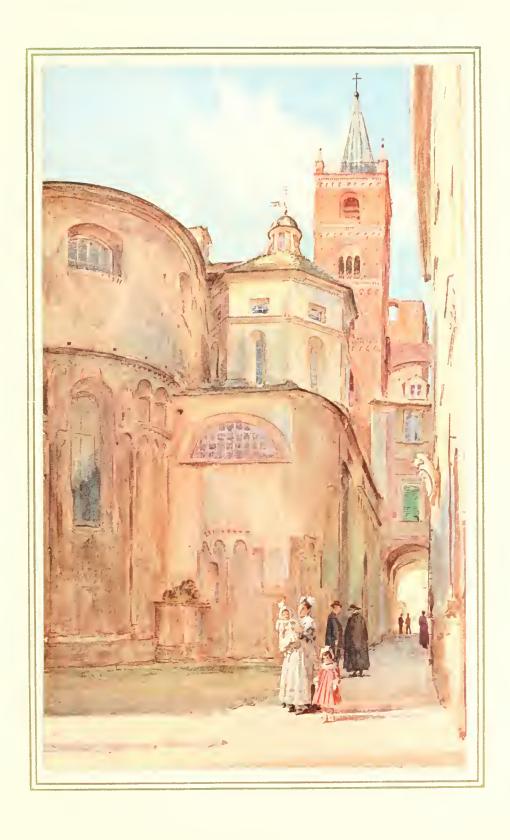
rooster outside my window, and goodness knows when they could get to bed at night.

There are two or three other inns here, but I judged that I had hit on the best one as the few officers stationed in Albenga used it for their mess, and one or two married ones were living here till their quarters were ready for them. Not until the town has outlived its reputation for unhealthiness will it be worth any enterprising hotel-keeper's while to provide one for the use of foreigners. It is now much more salubrious than formerly, as the marshy ground near it has been scientifically drained, and the fever the people were subject to is becoming a thing of the past. I looked out for "La Faccia d' Albenga," but as far as I could see the faces in Albenga looked as healthy as in the other coast towns.

Albenga is as medieval in aspect as Noli when seen from the outside, for its cincture of walls is almost intact, but being the central mart in a thriving valley its main streets have been more altered to suit modern requirements. Let us, however, once get out of its two chief thoroughfares and it looks as if time had stood still for half a millennium. It has not many so-called sights for a town of its size and antiquity; it is the town itself which is the sight. Its narrow and winding streets, arched over in some places, in others showing an irregular strip of sky between the heavily corniced roofs, its grim medieval towers, its walls and its gates—it is these we come to Albenga to see.

The Romanesque Church at Albenga

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It is the easiest town to lose oneself in and then suddenly to find oneself again near some well-known landmark. The cathedral is, as in most places, the dominant building. Its interior has not much to attract; it is its battered old shell which cannot fail to interest. A great deal of the old Lombard structure is left, and it has two fine fourteenth-century Gothic towers; there are Renaissance excrescences, and parts of the old husk are hid by dwelling-houses. It is too enclosed by other buildings to see more than a bit at a time. The view I give is of the north-east angle; I had to go there early, for the sun was off the face of the tower by nine o'clock, after which the effect was too monotonous.

On the extreme right of the drawing, and in sharp perspective, is an old palace which occupies two sides of the piazza—the side not visible being behind where I sat—and which is surmounted by a medieval crenellated tower. Having one day to seek shelter from the rain I stood in the palace doorway and whiled away my time in sketching a corner of the piazza. The owner presently arriving kindly opened the double doors so as to enable me to get on with my sketch more in comfort. He seemed pleased to air the little English he spoke, and often joined me on the following mornings while I was at work on my cathedral subject. He had more the appearance of an English country squire than that of an Italian nobleman. I asked his name of one of the servants, and being told that he was the Marchese Domenico I was little the wiser; but on returning to

my inn I let the landlord have a look at my drawing, when he at once recognized that I had taken it from an angle of the Palazzo Del Carretto. "The full name of the owner," he went on to say, "is il Marchese Domenico Del Carretto di Balestrino"—a living representative of the beautiful Alassia and the heroic Aleramo, a direct descendant, through the lady, of Charlemagne, and, through Aleramo, from Saxon kings stretching back to the dawn of history.

Had the stupid servant told me the other names besides Domenico there is no knowing what interesting bits of family history the good-natured marquis might have told me. After this I saw him no more, for he had gone to look after his estates still situated in the marquisate which Otho I. had founded in the tenth century. I felt a certain satisfaction that an illustrious descent of such antiquity should produce one who might so easily have been mistaken for an English country gentleman.

There are three sculptured lions in this piazza after which it is called, and one of which is seen on the left of my illustration. These, the Marchese told me, stood at the base of a Roman column and were unearthed in this square when some additions to the church were made.

In the centre of a court adjoining this piazza stands an octangular ninth-century baptistery; its base is several feet below the level of the pavement and of the cathedral to which it belongs. It is supported by eight granite columns with Corinthian capitals, green with the damp

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of ages. There are the remains of some paintings on the holy-water stoup and early Christian mosaics on the vault. It is the "sight" which every tourist is brought to see. Very interesting from an archæological point of view, but pictorially it looks rather ridiculous rising as it does from a kind of railed bear's-pit surrounding it.

What may mostly interest the antiquary is the Ponte Lunga, a low-arched Roman viaduct which approaches the walls of the town from its eastern side. Whether this crossed an actual inlet of the sea or only a stretch of marshy land I was unable to find out. From the spring of the arches it must have been double its present height, and built as the Romans understood building it was more than the barbarian hordes could demolish in their work of destruction. The parts now missing probably served as a quarry when the medieval city rose from the ruins of ancient Albingaunum.

This viaduct and a stray capitol or a broken sarcophagus seen here and there are not sufficient to interest us in Albenga as being a Roman city; it is the medieval one on its site which awakens our sympathies. Would that there were a Don Luigi Descalzi to unravel its mysteries and tell of the stirring events its remaining towers have witnessed. Both the historian and the archæologist seem to have left this place severely alone. Not even a pamphlet giving its story could I discover in the place itself.

Everyone can tell something of the French occupation during the Napoleonic wars. Albenga was the centre

of military operations in 1794, and two years later Napoleon made it his headquarters. In 1797 it became a part of the short-lived Ligurian Republic.

With a change in some of the leading actors the tragedy of Albenga's medieval history is much the same as that of Noli or Rapallo, or of most of the Italian towns. In his "Age of the Despots" John Addington Symonds sums up a state of things which may be equally applied to each one: "It would seem as though the most ancient furies of antagonistic races, enchained and suspended for centuries by the magic of Rome, had been unloosed; as though the indigenous populations, tamed by antique sculpture, were reverting to their primal instincts. Nor is this the end of the perplexity. Not only are the cities at war with each other, but they are plunged in ceaseless strife within the circuits of their The people with the nobles, the burghs with ramparts. the castles, the plebeians with the burgher aristocracy, the men of commerce with the men of arms and ancient lineage, Guelfs and Ghibellines, clash together in persistent fury. One half of the city expels the other half. The exiles roam abroad, cement allies, and return to extirpate their conquerors. Fresh proscriptions and new expulsions follow. Again alliances are made and revolutions are accomplished. All the ancient feuds of the town are crossed, recrossed and tangled in a web of madness that defies analysis."

These lines give so accurate an impression of the story of every walled city in Italy that we may as well

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not try to untangle the web of madness of Albenga in particular. Some romantic incident still recounted by the people, or the story of some relic still preserved in the records of the church, may, if it be peculiar to the district visited, be of interest to those who dip into a book of this kind.

Madame de Genlis resided for some years at Lusignano, a village four miles north of Albenga, and laid the scenes of some of her novels here. An added interest is given to the tower now rising above the Communal Palace, as having been the prison in which the Duke of Cerifalco immuned his Duchess for nine long years. But how far this is founded on fact we are not given to know.

What exciting events may not have occurred in and around the great Malespina tower! And what a medieval ring there is in the name Torre dei Guelfi, the next highest of the existing ones! The grandest from its proportions and fine state of preservation is the Torre del Carretto di Balestrino, although it ranks about fourth in height. The present Marchese of that name told me that there were formerly over seventy towers in Albenga; but most of them had disappeared before 1628, judging from a fresco of that date lately discovered beneath the whitewash in the church of S. Maria Infontibus, the next largest church to the Duomo. I could there only count sixteen, though doubtless the bases of many others were then hidden by the dwellings built around them.

The church with this fine-sounding name stands within a hundred yards from the cathedral. It has a fine fourteenth-century pointed doorway; but it has otherwise been so ruthlessly altered during the baroque period that little remains to detain us there.

Albenga is as delightful when seen from a distance with its still existing towers rising above its walls and gates as it is in its narrow and tortuous streets. It was even more so at this time of the year when the snow still capped its mountainous background, and when the plain it dominates was arrayed in all the glories of Spring.

Regardless of advice given me some years since by the late Herbert Marshall—not to try and paint the spring but to write about it—I, nevertheless, made some attempts at spring's glorious array as a setting for the stern-walled and towered Albenga—attempts, alas, too painful to write about! I felt like a cook who had made a horrible pudding by stuffing too many plums into it.

Many a time did I watch the declining sun burn crimson the cluster of towers, and flush the pale gold buildings beneath, while the pink blossoms turned to violet with the lengthening of the shadows across the plain. But if I found it impossible to do justice to this with my pallet how can I hope to do this with my pen?

A fragment of the town with some of its towers and the Centa flowing beneath its walls was within easier reach of my brush. And, if less of a poet's dream than when seen from across the blossoming plain, it lends itself more readily to pictorial treatment. Vicolo del Ponte, Villa Nuova di Albenga

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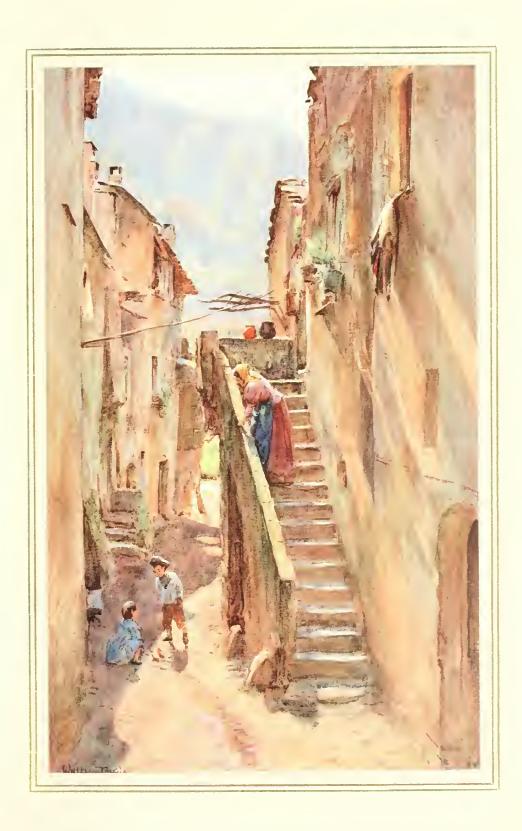
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#### CHAPTER XVII

VILLANOVA D' ALBENGA, THE GUESTS AT THE ALBERGO DI COMMERCIO, AND THE JOURNEY TO DIANO MARINA

ILLANOVA D' ALBENGA lies six miles inland from the mother town, and unless one knew something of the history of the latter one might easily mistake it for the younger of the two. Albenga still retains much of the dignity and romance of a medieval city; but at Villanova there is little besides its crumbling walls to remind us that time has not stood still since the middle ages.

Were this little town in the centre of the mountainous regions beyond it, one might account for its apparent poverty; but it stands at the head of a fertile delta, and on the main road which follows the river up to its source in the Ligurian Alps. That it once had something worth protecting is evident from its cincture of walls; at present nothing but the barest necessities to keep the body and soul together are anywhere to be found. Vacant rooms and whole houses are here in plenty; but not a bed to accommodate a stranger is to be had. The town is so aggravatingly picturesque that

I was prepared to sleep on anything so as to be able to devote some days to painting in its street. The neglected state of the road necessitated an hour-and-a-half drive to reach it, and a three-hours' daily jolting in the crazy old diligence tightly packed between the peasants and their produce was more than my enthusiasm for its picturesqueness could stand.

The *osteria*, where some bread and cheese is obtainable, might have been the crypt of a medieval church, from its vaulted roof and the thickness of its walls. To supplement my lunch the landlady left two babies in the charge of another slightly older to hunt the neighbouring fowl roosts for some eggs. Whether she took me for a glutton or a millionaire I can't say; but her surprise was great when I said she might fry three. From the way she dusted the bench, spread a clean apron on the table, and shooed off an inquisitive hen, I was evidently an exceptional guest and one to whom sixpence might be charged with impunity.

Villanova is not a discovery of mine, for she told me that other *signori* had driven over from Alassio to paint the old well in front of her house. Why people who can afford the luxury of a carriage should do this work was a mystery she could not solve. It may also have puzzled her that a well should have such an attraction to people who sternly refused to drink its water.

I had plenty of time to hear all she had to say about Villanova, as the rain kept me some hours in her osteria. I heard the oft told tale of how most of the

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men had either emigrated or had gone to the large cities to find some work, and how the little work to do here was mainly left to the women and children. Albenga being nearer the coast, and at present on the railway, all the trade of the plain is monopolized by it.

Most of the people live in the upper stories of the houses, which are reached by a flight of external stone stairs, the ground floor being given up to the cattle or for the storage of farm produce. A large gateway gives access to the town, and one or two postern gates lead to the river, in a bend of which Villanova stands. The walls are pierced in other places, but it is hard to say whether these were originally doorways or merely holes broken through to admit the cattle.

The church is a poor one and I presume from the patched cassock of the priest that the living is poorer still.

The little town of Garlenda, a few miles further up the valley, is less interesting; but from causes hard to account for the people appear more prosperous. Its church contains a picture by Domenichino, representing the Virgin and Child and two saints, which was about to be sold a few years ago for twenty-thousand francs so as to enable the church to be repaired and an organ added—a badly needed want in the first case, if not in the second. The whole parish, however, rather than part with the picture, rose *en masse* and prevented its sale. They have besides this a Poussin representing the Martyrdom of Erasmus.

Compared with other provinces in Italy works of art

are rare in the towns of Liguria, and quite exceptional in villages as remote as this one.

The drive back to Albenga is slow and uncomfortable, but it had its compensations in the beauty of the scenery. It was an exceptional year for blossom, the peach-trees were almost a solid mass of pink, and never have I seen pear-trees more laden with their greenish-white bloom. Four streams add their waters to the Centa a little below Villanova; and, from the road at the south extremity of the delta, we look across the well-watered plain to the beautifully outlined mountains on our extreme left. We pass Lusignano spread over a hill on our right, and we cannot wonder why Madame de Genlis chose a site there for her villa. The best part of the drive is, nevertheless, when we approach Albenga, and see its walls and towers rise from the plain.

Showery weather prevented my completing many a sketch; I was therefore an inmate of the Albergo di Commercio longer than I wished. The "Confort Moderne" in large letters on the façade was either a bit of misplaced humour or evidence that our worthy landlord's ideas of modern comfort were limited. If the wind blew open my bedroom door the next shower would make a pool on my floor; and without an umbrella it was not possible to reach my room in the dry. Having more Villanova mud on my boots than I cared for I tried the experiment of putting them outside my door at night. They were there in the morning, and no shower having washed off the mud they were in

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the same state of uncleanliness. The hint that I wanted them cleaned was lost on the maids, who thought they had been put out to air and also to show my confidence in the honesty of the establishment. "Confort Moderne" did evidently not include bootblacking; I wondered how it was that my neighbour, a fat cavalry major, always came down with a shine on his boots. I tracked him one morning down a passage and up a flight of stairs leading nowhere in particular, and found him handling a blacking-brush as one to the manner born. After that we were competitors in putting on a polish.

A bath was also not included in the "Confort Moderne," nor could I discover any place in Albenga where such a thing was obtainable. It seems odd that people who are so constantly washing their linen should have so little convenience for washing their bodies.

The landlady was a hard-working intelligent little woman, and was aware that tourists avoided her hotel or cleared out the next day if by stress of circumstances they put up for a night. Full as the inn generally was, she could only make two ends meet owing to the low charges her clientèle could afford to pay. "What am I to do to make it more attractive to the tourist?" she asked. To pull the place down and build another was the only remedy, and one beyond their means. I could not advise her to do that, for were there even a possible hotel for winter visitors to the Riviera she would have to wait till the evil reputation of Albenga

had died down and, at its best, it could never claim to be a health resort. Alassio being only five miles off, more sheltered and on the sea-front, would catch all the clients our landlady might hope to draw in her net. Armed with a Kodak, a half-day's excursion to Albenga satisfies the artistic cravings of most people; and this can be easily done from Alassio.

With this plain living there was also some high thinking. The landlord had the tact to place me at a side table alongside a professor at the local university. He was quite a young man, who, in spite of long hours with his pupils, nevertheless found time to do a lot of reading. Besides being well-read in the literature of his own country it was astonishing how well he was up in that of mine as well as in that of Germany. He spoke no English, and had read most of our classics in translation; but not satisfied with this he was studying his favourites in the original with the help of a dictionary. Sometimes he would venture on quotation, and having no idea of our accent it was difficult to keep my countenance when he quoted familiar lines; but when these were new to me, as was only too often the case, it might have been Sanscrit as well as any other language.

Like my friend the Piemontese at Lavagna he had a contempt for the Liguresi. He thought them a rude, uncultured people, though considering the class to which most of the other guests belonged he was too severe on them.

Born and bred in Turin he considered himself

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Piemontese, although his father was a Spaniard and his mother Greek. His hopes and ambition were to be transferred to Rome. "Think what a joy it would be to hear my language spoken in the full rich tones of the Romans instead of the horrible jargon which flays one's ears in Liguria." He longed for this as much as I longed for a bath.

In Italy the enunciation of the language is a matter of race, and not so much a matter of class, as with us. Their ideal is expressed in the saying: "La lingua toscana in bocca romana." Dante having made the Tuscan dialect the classical Italian it has become the lingua franca of the educated; but in their homes and amongst intimates they soon drop into the dialect of their district. The educated Roman adds to the Tuscan he speaks the rich intonation lacking in Tuscany.

I have often heard the shortcomings of a man partly excused on account of his fine pronunciation, in the same way as we may hear a worthy man condemned in England owing to his difficulties with the aspirates. In the first case the keener æsthetic sense of the Italian is appealed to, while in the second the class prejudice of the Englishman is shocked.

The loss of the Signor Professor's company made me regret leaving Albenga as much as anything else. The town offers as much to a painter as Noli, and possibly more; but in my case the conditions had been more favourable in the latter, and had enabled me to make a better use of my time.

A tunnel on the westward journey soon blacks out the whole valley of the Centa, and Albenga takes its place amongst the many walled Italian cities stored in one's memory.

We get a good view between this and the next tunnel of the castle-crowned islet of Gallinaria, while on our right we are shut in by the headland we skirt. One or two more tunnels then follow, and we pass the back of Alassio. The town looks everything the advertiser of winter resorts could wish; but it did not tempt me to get off the train. Its setting is in striking contrast to that of Albenga, the one place on the whole Riviera which has the characteristics of a city of the plains. Alassio is at the foot of two mountains which shelter it from the north-east and the west. There is a luxuriance of semi-tropical shrubs which would perish in its more exposed neighbour; we are, in short, once more in surroundings associated with the Riviera.

We next pass the fishing village of Laiguelia, and enter a long tunnel traversing the Capo Mele, the headland which marks the western limit of the Gulf of Genoa. When we are once more in daylight we are crossing the beautiful Val d' Andora. The town lies at the head of the valley, some three miles from the coast; and here I should have broken my journey had I been able to hear of any possible accommodation. It would be a fascinating spot to camp in with a sympathetic companion, and at a season when more settled weather is probable.

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We pass Andora Marina, an offshoot of the older village, and we begin to look forward to seeing Cervo S. Bartolomeo.

I had heard great things of this place and had also heard that if I wished to paint there I should find no accommodation nearer than at Diano Marina some three miles further along the coast. Diano Marina was therefore the goal of my journey. It is not till we get to the station, when approaching from the east, that we get a view of Cervo, perched as it is on the crest and slope of the bluff we have to round. It was all and more than I was given to expect, and seen from the railway it makes a brave display against the sky. I felt sure I should find nothing at Diano Marina, as I knew it had been mostly rebuilt since the earthquake of 1887; anyhow it had a pension fitted up for English guests and failing that a large hotel. And should Diano Marina have nothing in it I cared to paint it would at all events serve as a base of operations for an attack on Cervo.

#### CHAPTER XVIII

DIANO MARINA, CERVO S. BARTOLOMEO, AND A SERMON IN THE CHURCH AT DIANO CASTELLO.

PRECIOUS little of Diano must have been left standing after the 1887 earthquake, for what I found was an entirely new town built in quadrilateral blocks, and might have been a bit lopped off from any other modern Italian town and stuck on the shore here. Not expecting much I was not very disappointed. The pension not having a vacant room and the large hotel being closed till the summer season was a more serious matter. The lady who keeps the former consoled me by telling me of a possible inn, the Albergo Garibaldi, and I was fortunate enough to find their best room disengaged.

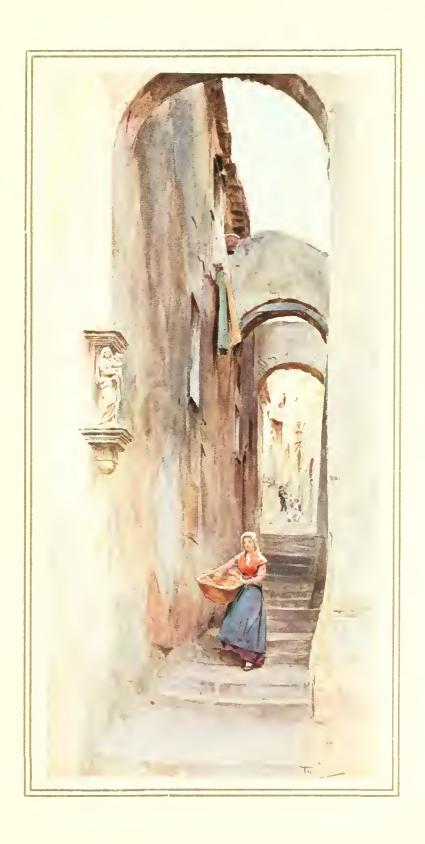
The "Garibaldi" has much in common with the Albenga inn; but the few bedrooms and arrangements it has in an adjoining house were all that could be desired. Delicate people wishing to avoid an English winter and unable to afford the expensive hotels in the more fashionable resorts might do worse than go to this place. Ladies might possibly prefer the pension to the

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## DIANO MARINA

noisier albergo, but in either place they would find comfortable board and lodging from five shillings a day. The landlady of the "Garibaldi" even informed me that for a stay longer than a week she would lower her charges. How they can do it is a mystery, especially as they count on no extras, the wine being included; and it is quite a mistake to imagine that housekeeping can be done for much less in Italy than in England.

My complaint is that this inn is not at Cervo instead of in this prim and uninteresting Diano. Very few trains stop at Cervo, and the time often wasted while waiting for overdue ones generally obliged me to walk or drive there. It is, however, well worth a little trouble to get there, for not only is the town remarkably picturesque whether seen from the plains or from the sea, but it is equally good seen in detail within its walls. It looks large enough to contain a population of three or four thousand souls, but I was told there were hardly as many hundreds. Women and children and a few men past their work were all I saw; the houses were mostly empty and in woeful repair, though no signs of the earthquake were visible.

I entered the one wine shop and inquired whether there was a bed to be got there or anywhere else in the town. "No, no," said the old woman, "what could induce anyone to stay in a poor old town such as this?" I told her that some artists would certainly do so, which struck her as very odd. "With the new and clean Diano close at hand would you want to make

pictures of this wretched old place?" "Old as it is," I answered, "it withstood the earthquake in a way newer towns failed to do, and I daresay you were glad you were here in 1887 instead of down in the valley."

This started her well off, and as it was raining outside I was glad to hear all she could tell me. "We felt the terremoto right enough, and could see the houses toppling down at Diano; but solidly built as we are on this rock we got little more than a shaking. Our old houses remain, but where are our men who lived in them? They all have to find work elsewhere—c'è niente, niente da fare qui. Our fishermen were once famous throughout the Mediterranean, and not a sardine do we get now unless we buy it in Diano. The coast is too rocky to allow of shore fishing, and the better equipped coral smacks of the Rapallesi have ruined that trade of ours."

The church of S. Bartolomeo, which is the great feature of this rock-built town, is an evidence of the prosperity of the former Cervesi fishermen, and its rococo interior would have been more gorgeous than at present but for the following tragic event: When this church was nearly complete money was not sufficiently forthcoming to decorate it as sumptuously as the pious inhabitants wished. To remedy this the sailors vowed to the Madonna that the whole of the profits of their next catch would be devoted to a chapel raised in his honour. They had discovered a spot off the African coast where a valuable kind of coral was plentiful and

## DIANO MARINA

which they managed to keep secret from all others. The decoration of this chapel was to have been their thankoffering. Every man and boy joined in this quest, leaving the women and children to fend for themselves. But months went by without any news of the coral fleets; then years brought no ship back to their port, and except the boys of tender years every male was lost to the town. Whether they perished in some storm or whether they were taken captive by the corsairs nobody can tell.

The weather clearing I bade the old woman good-bye and proceeded to explore this singular town. medieval builders could hardly have chosen a more difficult site on which to ply their art. It was comparatively easy when the upper part was being constructed, far from level as that is; but its approach from the shore necessitated fresh adaptation every few vards. At places the rock rises sheer from an inclined shelf beneath it, and through a tunnel or a series of arches supporting the houses stuck against the rock's face we proceed till a flight of steps takes us round an angle and brings us to a higher ledge. Years of rain and sunshine have so assimilated the masonry to the rock on which it rests that we are often puzzled to distinguish where the work of nature ends and that of man begins.

Where the houses face each other on the higher levels they are tied together by flying buttresses, and the streets are so narrow that we only see a strip of sky between

these overhead arches. There it has much in common with the old parts of San Remo and many other towns on this earthquake-shaken coast; it is where the town hangs to the side of the cliff that we marvel at the work of these fine old builders.

What an insight we get of life in the middle ages! Lightly built cottages on the shore would have sufficed for the wants of the fisher-folk but for the constant menace from the sea. As it was, their fortress-built town barely sufficed to protect them from the Barbary corsairs, for even as late as the beginning of the last century we hear of many being carried away from this coast to be sold as slaves in the African markets.

The comparative security of its position is one of the chief causes of its present decline. Life and property being safe in the valley below, with the exception of an occasional earthquake, the fisher-folk naturally prefer to build where they can more conveniently ply their trade than to keep their former inaccessible homes in repair, and only the peasants who cultivate the terraced slopes of the hill use the deserted houses to store their produce.

The new names to the deserted lanes add an irony to the general decay. A rat was all the life I saw in the Via Umberto Primo; there was a little more animation in the Via Mazzini, where an old man was driving a pig into the house of some former grandee, and in the Piazza XXII Settembre, the forum of Cervo, a few fowls sought a precarious living amongst the middens heaped on the pavement.

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A sense of the ridiculous is seldom a characteristic of the official mind; and whether a jackass renamed these streets or someone who intended it for a jest it is equally lamentable, for the old names which have been obliterated might have given us some insight into the story of the town. In some towns, when renaming the streets, they have the sense to leave the earlier name beneath the new. But surely some other means of honouring the great personages of the Risorgimento might be found.

The destroyed Diano Marina was probably a town of recent date, and peopled by the parent town of Diano Castello, a couple of miles inland, when with comparative safety houses dared be built on the shore. The new town, run up since the earthquake, probably replaces one that was not of great interest, whereas Diano Castello remains a typical old Italian hill town.

I strolled up there one Sunday morning and saw most of its population gathered in the parish church. As at Cervo, there were few who were not at one of the two extremes of life, those able to work having sought that work elsewhere.

I sat through the sermon, and regret that much of it was lost on me, for the priest whenever he took his parishioners into his confidence lapsed into the dialect. He began by reading a pastoral letter in that monotone often affected by ecclesiastics, but when he made his comments he showed extraordinary powers of declamation, often beginning on a very high note and descending

to a low rumble that seemed to proceed from the bottom of the pulpit. His pauses were long enough to let one speculate on which note in his gamut he would throw out the first word of his next sentence and whether it would be in good Italian or in dialect. There was fortunately enough of the former to let me understand what excited him so much.

The pastoral note was one which has caused some amusement in the Italian papers. It was no other than a papal condemnation of the Tango. It might cause some giddy young persons to reflect in a fashionable congregation, but it was surely wasted energy here. The poor, worn-out old people and the children who were either asleep or playing under the seats were warned against the dangers of this "obscene dance imported from Brazil, or some such place," and threatened with condign punishment should they ever indulge in "such shameless exhibitions."

When the good old padre had laboured that subject sufficiently he led on to another with which his congregation may not have been in such complete sympathy. This was the poor attendance at the early mass. "What had I here this morning?" A long pause following to prepare us for what this could be. "One poor old woman." A second pause during which eyes moved about to discover the fortunate woman. "And what were you all doing?" Pauses now becoming uncomfortable. "Why, snoring in your beds." A feeling of guilt coming my way. "No doubt you all

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thought yourself very good in not dancing the Tango, but how about these duties and privileges you so shamefully neglect?" He then lapsed into the dialect and I lost what followed. From his smile and friendly address I gathered that he did not wish to be too hard on us.

About a third of the little town had tumbled down a side of the hill during the earthquake twenty-seven years ago. It still lay there as it fell, the remaining two-thirds being quite sufficient to house its ever diminishing population.

The church had evidently had a narrow escape, for some adjoining buildings were still in ruin, and one of its walls had been newly buttressed.

Beyond this village three successive hills, each rising higher as we get more inland, are capped by a village, each one more quaint than the last. First we have Diano S. Pietro, next Diano Borello, and lastly Diano Arentino.

I asked the landlady of my inn whether she was in Diano during the awful day of February in 1887. "Indeed I was," she answered, "and besides losing my mother and a sister I only escaped death by a miracle." She told me that the shocks lasted between seven and nine a.m. during which time the village, as it then was, lost 232 souls. All who escaped after the first shock fled to the edge of the sea, and from there they saw most of the remaining houses crash down at different intervals. "The church is all that remains of the former place," she said. "Several times we saw the

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tower rock violently, and terrified as we were we all prayed that our church might be spared. Nothing less than a miracle could have saved it. A violent commotion of the sea drove us back into our ruined village or we should have been engulfed in a great wave that dashed in as far as the front of the church. We were too terrified to think of our loss till these shocks ceased. We were too scattered to know who might have succumbed. It was while the dead and the dying were brought from under the ruins of our home that we realized the full horror of the catastrophe."

The country at large contributed liberally towards the rebuilding of the village, which has since increased to a town owing to its being on the high road and close to the shore. It also attracts many Italians during the bathing season when the large hotel opens its doors; and little villas are springing up on the higher ground at the west end of the valley. Oneglia, a busy manufacturing town, is only four miles further on, and two miles beyond that is the harbour and town of Porto Maurizio; the resuscitated Diano will lay itself out more and more to catch the tripper, and its sea-fishing will drop to little more than a picturesque incident in the excursionist's day.

#### CHAPTER XIX

THE COAST TOWNS BETWEEN DIANO MARINA AND SAN REMO; THE TWO SAN REMOS, THE OLD AND THE NEW

THE aspect of Oneglia is that of a prosperous modern town; its modernity would not be striking were we to approach it from the west. But after lingering some weeks on the stretch of coast between it and Savona a town more or less up-to-date comes as a surprise. In spite of this newness Oneglia has existed as a town of some importance since the middle ages. Its history would be too much of a repetition of the vicissitudes of the other coast towns to enter fully into it here. Previous to 1566 it was the capital of a small principality belonging to a branch of the Doria family, the most distinguished member of which was born here in 1466. This was Andrea, to whom we have often referred, and whose life makes an epoch in the history of the Genoese Republic.

Oneglia cannot claim much beauty; but much that is beautiful can be seen from it. On a lofty peninsula, two miles across the bay, its neighbour Porto Maurizio makes a bold outline against the sky, and if

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we get a little nearer and view it from the shore we might take it for a grand old medieval town thrown up to the best advantage by the hill it covers. As there are many other places more worth visiting we should do well to let this view of Porto Maurizio suffice. Disappointment awaits those who see it more in detail.

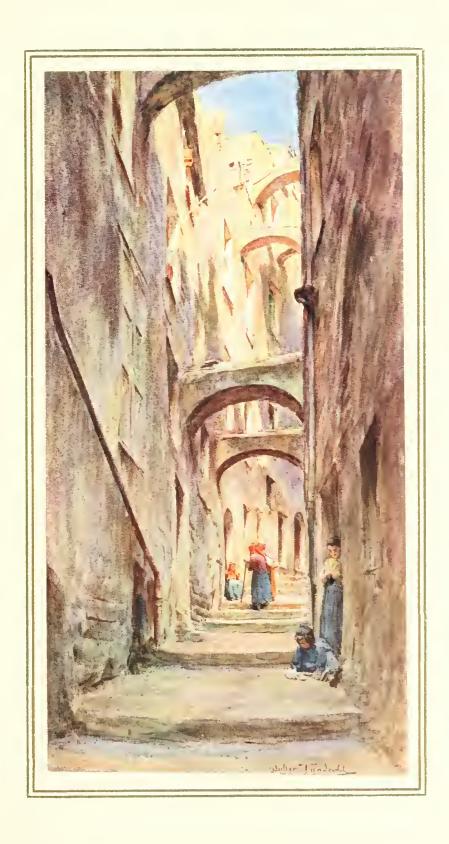
The next twelve miles of coast present nothing exceptional in scenery; but we once more pass through a district as forgotten and unsophisticated as that we have seen east of Oneglia. The low massive towers of San Lorenzo al Mare, the fortified S. Stefano crowning a hill on our right, and other crumbling fortresses whose absent stones may be traced in the dwellings near them, tell of days which excite the imagination but which it were folly to regret.

We cross the beautiful valley of Taggia and after skirting Capo Verde the outlying parts of San Remo bring us with a rush to present-day times.

The town of Taggia is some three miles from the coast; it is well worth a visit, partly on account of the town itself and partly to see some specimens of the one fifteenth-century artist of note which, as far as I know, the Riviera has produced. This is Lodovico Brea. Little seems known of him except that he was born at Nice, and although his work does not take a high place amongst the masterpieces of the quattrocento it is nevertheless a treat to come across it in a part of Italy singularly devoid of local talent. Those who, like myself, have delighted in the pages of "Dr. Antonio"

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### THE COAST TOWNS

may be interested to see the house in which its gifted author, Giovanni Ruffini, lived from 1875 to 1881, the year of his death. A monument commemorates him and his two brothers who suffered in the cause of the unification of Italy.

An interesting excursion may be made from San Remo to Taggia and returning across the hills via Bussana, a ruined hill-town which, more than any, makes us realize the terrible havoc made by the 1887 earthquake. No attempt has been made to rebuild it; and with the exception of the shrubs and brambles, which partly conceal the desolation, the town remains as it was when the last bodies were unearthed beneath its More money was subscribed than required for rebuilding, and fortunately the survivors elected to build a new town more accessible to the coast and have left untouched what remains as an interesting ruin. campanile still stands, and in its way is picturesque, but the baroque church interior is anything but a noble ruin; its sham construction and tawdry decoration look ghastly after a few years of exposure to the weather. A fat lump of a cherub sprawls beneath the high altar, while its companion still sticks to its original place, to all appearance by the cobwebs which envelop it. With the exception of this gimcrack interior everything else savours of the ruin of a medieval little town.

Let us hope that the survivors and the new generation find more prosperity in the new town they have built than in the less accessible one they left. But for

ugliness Bussana Nuova beats any new town I have ever seen. Most of the money subscribed has gone to building the church. It has its points though it fails to awaken much interest.

We return through the new part of San Remo which is ever extending eastward and is known as the German part, and after two miles of this we pass through the busiest quarters and get to the western end, known as the English part. The old town which lies on the slopes above the centre is happily still untouched by these foreign influences. San Remo is the one place on either of the Rivieras where one can be surrounded with all the luxury of the present day, and yet by passing through one of the gates of the old town we can revel in the picturesque and much of the romance of medieval times.

"There are two San Remos," writes Mr. Baring Gould, "that of to-day, with its pretentious villas rivalling each other in ugliness, and the old San Remo. The former is clean with open spaces, a broad main street, and is dotted about with palms and agaves in sub-tropical gardens. The old San Remo is a network, a labyrinth of narrow, tortuous lanes. The old portion goes by the name of *La Pigna*, the Pine-cone, because of the manner in which the ancient houses are grouped, pressed together one on another, rising towards a culminating conical point.

"The old town is built upon a hill that descends gently to the sea and whose summit is crowned by a sanctuary.

## THE COAST TOWNS

The streets twist about, are steep, with steps, and paved with bricks or rolled stones. The old houses elbow one another away to get a little breath, or sustain themselves from falling by stretching out a flying buttress, each against its vis-à-vis, like tipsy men with linked arms hoping to keep their feet by mutual support."

There is one thing Old San Remo has in common with the New, which the picturesque quotation might fail to convey, and that is its cleanliness. Visitors usually come with a camera in one hand and a handkerchief in the other, and though they constantly use the former they have little occasion for the latter. It is greatly to the credit of the authorities that they preserve the medieval character of the old town while doing all in their power to keep it wholesome and clean.

With this as a sketching-ground, being amongst relations and friends in a well-appointed modern hotel, the enjoyment of luxuries looked forward to while roughing it in humble Italian alberghi might conceivably have been the sum of my happiness. It was indeed a pleasure to associate once more with well-bred people of my own country; to be within easy reach of books and news of what was going on in England, and with a comfortable chair to read it in; but above all it was a pleasure to converse with English ladies and hear the chatter and laughter of their pretty, fresh-faced daughters. Yes, it was certainly very pleasant, and a few days of rest in these surroundings was probably all to the good.

I had spent two or three months at San Remo some years previously; and, after the season was over, I was obliged to move to an hotel run by Italians which keeps open after those which cater for foreigners are closed. Now, when I got to work again in the old town, I somehow felt less in sympathy with my subjects than during the latter part of my previous visit. The streets had not changed, and they are quite as picturesque as those which had filled me with enthusiasm in Noli or Albenga-why did these not do the same? I pondered this in my mind while returning one day from La Pigna to the Grand Hôtel des Anglais, and no sooner had I reached the carriage drive than the sight of the huge palatial building brought home to me what was amiss: these surroundings were not in tune with the work I was on. I recalled vain attempts to paint Japan while I remained in a similar kind of hotel there, and how my work improved when I dwelt amongst the people. It was the same thing in the near East as well as in European countries. Had I been obliged to stay a lengthened period in my present surroundings I should have dropped the old town and sought for subjects amongst the people and in the gardens of New San Remo.

The spacious, but tasteless, apartments soon began to pall on me; the long table d'hôte meals became irksome, and lack of appetite deprived the richer fare of its enjoyment. Charming as some of my fellow guests were I hope it may be in England that I renew these

## THE COAST TOWNS

friendships—when next in Italy I shall again live as the Italians.

I should be doing an injustice to the obliging land-lord if what I have said left an impression that his hotel was a comfortless place in which to pass a season; for there could be no better recommendation than that his guests return there should they spend more than one season at San Remo. He catered for the English, and his hotel was as English and as little Italian as he could possibly make it—even to the brownish slop many Englishmen still drink as coffee. But it is in England that I enjoy an English hotel, and not a make-believe one on the Continent. There are at present many good Italian inns, as, for instance, the one at Sestri Levante; the rough accommodation in some of the other towns and villages is, after all, in keeping with the humbler classes who use it, and also with the modesty of the bill.

I spent a month here in a German hotel some fifteen years ago, and this being kept by a German-Swiss it was much more German than the Hôtel des Anglais is English. It was my first visit to San Remo, and I chose that inn because I had a German friend there, and at that time I spoke more German than Italian. The absurdity of living amongst Germans and eating German-prepared food outside the "Fatherland" soon struck me; and I was glad when the place closed at the end of the season and gave me a good excuse to move to an Italian house which remains open all the year. Not till then did I really feel that I was in Italy.

I was also close to the old town where my subjects lay, and felt less of a stranger in it while living more as its people live.

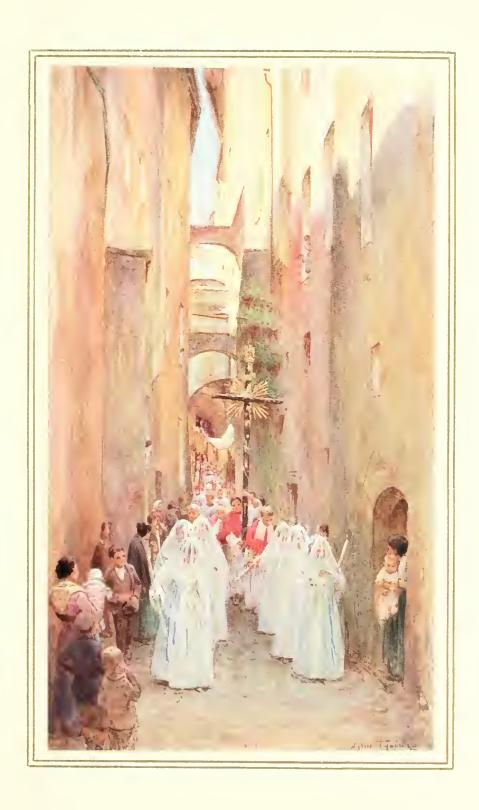
I do not go so far as to say that a painter of cows, for instance, should live in a cow-shed; but I feel convinced that he would learn more about cows if he lodged with a dairyman than if he were the guest of the squire.

I stayed on in San Remo, on my former visit, till the early summer, and witnessed the procession of the "Corpus Domini." Whether it was because I had then seen fewer processions that this one made a lasting impression, or whether it was on account of its picturesque setting, I can't say. But it was not till years after that, with the help of some studies, I was able to paint it as well as if I had seen it the day before. The emblems of an ancient faith carried in solemn procession through the streets should always be a moving sight, whether one holds that faith or not; and at present it is more than an ordinary religious function: it is a public declaration of faith, and one which, in many so-called Catholic countries, may seriously prejudice the position of him who participates. The innumerable government billets in the Latin countries are seldom given to any man seen carrying a candle in a religious procession.

In most of the larger towns these processions are prohibited; whether this be so at San Remo since my former visit I can't say. I arrived during Holy Week,

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and although there was little to mark this in the streets the church interiors were hardly recognizable owing to the lavish decorations. On Good Friday the scene at the sepulchre was represented in one by life-sized wax figures on a low stage before the high altar. That this was well meant I am willing to admit; but it was a horrible, tawdry performance from an artistic point of view. On Easter Eve every youth and small boy is provided with a clapper, or a horn, or anything else that can distract the ear. The primary object is to drive off the evil spirits—the delight in making a hideous noise gives that object its zest.

San Remo has one very interesting church in that of S. Siro. Its style is described as Lombardic Romanesque. An ugly rococo frontage hid, until recently, the original work which we now see; and by careful restoration the work of the seventeenth century has also been removed from the interior. Its fourteenth-century tower had been knocked down when the English fleet bombarded San Remo in 1745, and this had been replaced by the absurd structure existing until the last few years. San Siro now ranks as one of the finest monuments of ecclesiastical architecture on the Riviera.

No sooner are the churches cleared of their Easter trappings than preparations for the following festival are seen in every street in the old town. It is not solely to decorate their own shrines that the San Remesi are so busy plaiting the leaves of the date palm. The bleached fronds, twisted into every possible shape, will be sent all

over the country to adorn the altars on Palm Sunday; and only those from this town are allowed to enter S. Peter's at Rome. We must go back to 1586 to discover the origin of this privilege.

In that year the Pope, Sixtus V., ordered that the obelisk which Caligula had brought over from Heliopolis should be set up in the square before S. Peter's, where it stands to this present day. It is said to have taken 800 men and 150 horses to drag it from the circus of Nero where it had stood. We are also told that it took forty-six cranes to raise the huge monolith and that Sixtus gave orders that no man, woman or child in the vast assembly should, under pain of death, utter a word during the momentous proceedings. In silence they watched the colossal stone rise from the ground until it was nearly in an upright position, and then it suddenly stopped. The suspense was awful and soon the ropes began to yield; a shout, "Acqua alle funi!" broke the silence, and the workmen at once threw buckets of water on to the ropes, and as these slowly shrunk so the obelisk rose till it stood firmly on its base.

This timely advice was given, despite the threat of death, by one named Bresca, a captain of a San Remo fishing smack. For thus having saved the obelisk Sixtus gave the intrepid sailor, his family, and their descendants the sole right to furnish the palms to S. Peter's. A reward which cost the Pontiff little but has added considerably to the prosperity of the Bresca family and to its native town.

#### CHAPTER XX

EXCURSIONS FROM SAN REMO: LA MADONNA DI
LAMPEDUSA; CERIANA, DOLCEACQUA. BORDIGHERA, AND
THE TRUE STORY OF ITS BOMBARDMENT BY
THE BRITISH FLEET

BOTH San Remo and its neighbour Bordighera have been spoilt to a certain extent by having the railway between them and the sea. Access to the beach by bridges and tunnels destroys some of the charm of a sea-side place. There has been much talk of taking the line behind both towns; but as this would involve an enormous expense, owing to the length of the tunnelling required, it will probably end in talk. For what they lack in this respect they make amends in the facilities they give for reaching what is most interesting and beautiful in the country behind them.

For an easy half-day's excursion there is nothing better than the ruined Bussana, of which we have spoken. Pedestrians can hurry through the east suburb of San Remo by taking the tram as far as Poggio, from

whence it is an easy walk of two or three miles with a good view of the ruined hill-town and valley beneath nearly the whole way.

Those who have read Dr. Ruffini's delightful novel, "Dr. Antonio," will wish to visit the shrine of the Madonna of Lampedusa. The miracle commemorated by this shrine has much in common with that of Mostallegro, said to have taken place half a century earlier; and what the latter is to the people of the Eastern Riviera so is this Madonna to those who dwell in the Western. In both cases the climb to the shrine is well worth the exertion even to those who disregard their associations. We get over the least interesting part of the road by taking the train to Taggia station, from whence we may either drive to the town or walk the three miles to the head of the valley which the town overlooks. The fertile Val di Taggia was an inlet of the sea to within recent times, for in 1525 Francis I., after his defeat at Pavia, embarked from Taggia itself on his leaving for Spain. The Argentina, which rushes through the arches of the grand old bridge above the town, has in this short period brought down sufficient débris from the mountains to raise its bed and drive back the sea from the town.

We cross the bridge and ascend the steep road to Castellaro, which smiles on us from the height on which it is perched; and while we wind up the road to the sanctuary we will refer to what Dr. Ruffini tells us of the Madonna di Lampedusa. "Andrea Arefosso, a

#### **EXCURSIONS FROM SAN REMO**

native of Castellaro, being the captain of a privateer, was one day attacked and defeated by the Turks and carried to the Isle of Lampedusa. Here he succeeded in making his escape and hiding himself until the Turkish vessel which had captured him left the island. Arefosso, being a man of expedients, set about building a boat, and finding himself in a great dilemma what to do for a sail ventured on the bold and original step of taking from the altar of some church or chapel of the island a picture of the Madonna to serve as one; and so well did it answer his purpose that he made a most prosperous voyage back to his native shores, and, in a fit of generosity, offered his holy sail to the worship of his fellow townsmen. The wonder of the affair does A place was chosen by universal not stop here. acclamation, two gun-shots in advance of the present sanctuary, and a chapel erected in which the gift was deposited with all due honour. But the Madonna, as it would seem, had an insurmountable objection to the spot selected, for, every morning that God made, the picture was found in the exact spot where the actual church now stands. At length the Castellini came to understand that it was the Madonna's express wish that her headquarters should be shifted to where her resemblance betook itself every night; and though it had pleased her to make choice of the most abrupt and steepest spot on the whole mountain, just where it was requisite to raise arches to lay a sure foundation for her sanctuary, the Castellini set themselves con amore to the

task so clearly revealed to them, and this widely renowned chapel was completed. This took place in 1619. In the course of time some wings were annexed for the accommodation of visitors and pilgrims and a terrace built; for though the Castellini have a small purse theirs is the great lever which can remove all impediments—the faith that brought about the Crusades."

Not only did the villagers construct the sanctuary we are approaching, but also the road whose zigzags up the shoulder of the mountain we ascend. To quote "Dr. Antonio "again :- "The Castellini who made this road in the sweat of their brows point it out with pride, as well they may. They tell you with infinite complacency how every one of the pebbles with which it is paved was brought from the sea-shore, those who had mules using them for that purpose, those who had none bringing up loads on their backs; how everyone, gentleman and peasant, young and old, women and boys, worked day and night with no other inducement than their love of the Madonna. The Madonna of Lampedusa is their creed, their occupation, their pride, their carroccio, their fixed idea."

These evidences of such a living faith move us, whatsoever views we may entertain of the miracle.

There is not much to detain us in the little church. We are apt to associate with the debased style of the seventeenth century a faith that has lost its vitality. However this may have been in the larger cities it does not seem to have been the case here.

#### EXCURSIONS FROM SAN REMO

Should the day be propitious we get a variety of beautiful views from the platform which supports the sanctuary. A screen of snow-clad Alps closes in the north horizon, boldly outlined hills and gorges intervening. Beneath us, looking south, spreads the smiling Val di Taggia with its medieval town spread over the higher ground on the right. And high above the undulating hills west and eastward of this spreads the wide horizon of the Mediterranean.

One of the features of the Italian Riviera is the suddenness with which we can drop from the new to the old. This is nowhere more striking than at San Remo. There is not a house within the walls of the old town to suggest the time in which we live; whereas, in the new town, every available site has its villa, its pension, or a brand-new cumbersome hotel. The poorer sites have been the portion of the jerry builder who has run up ugly rows of houses for the humbler folk who follow in the train of the ever increasing number of winter residents.

Hardly have we passed the last board advertising for sale a site suitable for the erection of any of the above, than we find ourselves in this unsophisticated Val di Taggia with its quaint medieval town.

I was there one Eastertide and witnessed the blessing of its houses. The priest accompanied by an acolyte went from door to door sprinkling each one with holy water and received in return a gift according to the means of the occupier; the acolyte's basket becoming

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heavier and heavier as they wended their way towards the parish church.

A long day's excursion for the pedestrian, or a half-day for those who go nowhere beyond the reach of their motor-cars, is to the romantic hill-town of Ceriana. It crests the spur of a hill at the head of the valley to which it gives its name. Seen from across the rushing stream at the foot of the hill few towns even in Italy make a bolder outline against the sky than Ceriana. It has an interesting old church and baptistery; but more characteristic than these are some of its streets, which are little more than galleries hewn out of the rock.

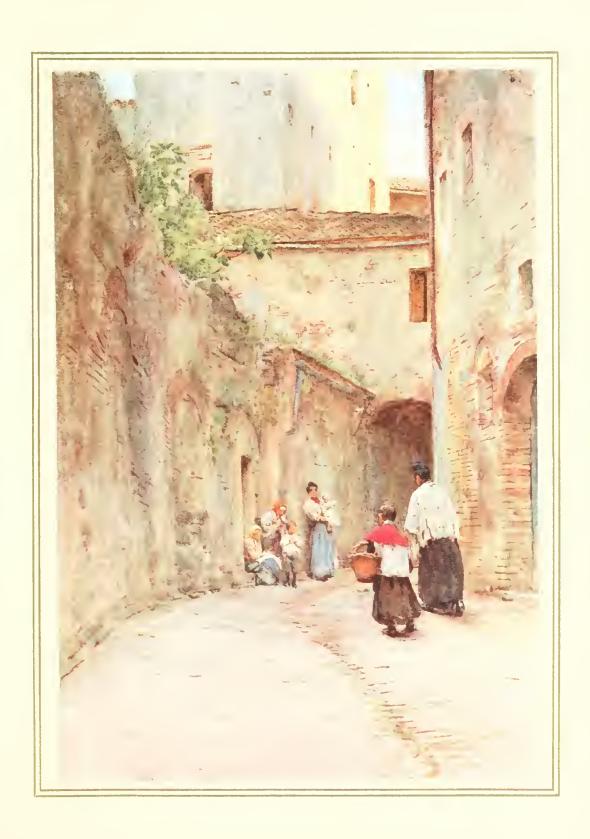
Bordighera being only eight miles west of San Remo, with a fairly frequent service of trains between the towns, Dolceacqua may be included amongst the San Remo excursions. The road to it leaves the coast a couple of miles from Bordighera and after ascending the valley of the Nervia it passes the village of Campo Its two curious twelfth-century churches are worth visiting, especially S. Pietro where we find some early frescoes and some pictures attributed to Brea. A little beyond this village stands an isolated square tower with a saddleback roof. It is presumably of the fourteenth century; but in this country, so full of vestiges of the middle ages, no one seems to have troubled to find out the history of this one. A precipitous rock crowned with the sanctuary of Santa Croce rises sheer above the old tower. Two or three miles further up the valley stands Dolceacqua.

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#### **EXCURSIONS FROM SAN REMO**

The main part of this romantic little town spreads over a hill with the Nervia at its base, a one-span bridge connecting it with the lower part on the opposite bank. Its outline is not as wildly picturesque as that of Ceriana, though in detail it gives more scope for the artist's brush. The imposing feudal stronghold of the Dorias rising from the houses built one above the other wherever a foothold was possible on the rocky base, forms a grim picture of the precarious existence here in medieval times. The shell of the castle is almost intact, and it is not till we approach nearer and see the sky through its windows that we realize that roof and floors have since fallen in. It was inhabited till the middle of the eighteenth century; whether it was dismantled during the wars of that period or left to fall into its present state of ruin through neglect we are unable to find out. On the whole the romance of the hill-town near Bordighera outweighs the picturesque of San Remo's Ceriana.

We get, in a somewhat lesser degree, the qualities of the two hill-towns by descending to the valley of the Romolo, a stream which takes its source on the slopes of Monte Bignone, flows past the sanctuary that gives it its name, and before being carried beneath the lower part of the old town laves all the linen of San Remo and shoots its drainage and soapsuds into the sea.

It is far beyond the Rocca bridge and above the spot where the washerwomen are incessantly at work that we get the best distant view of Old San Remo. There

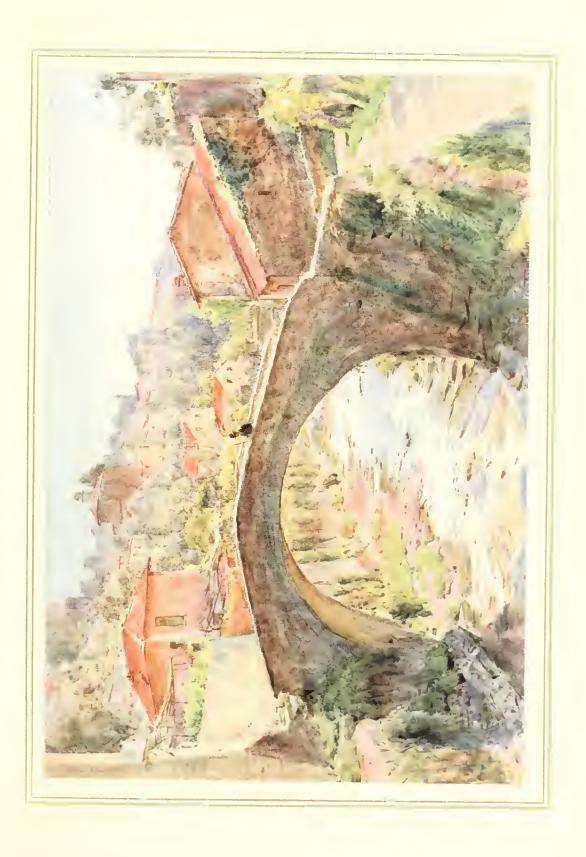
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the stream still preserves its limpidity, and whether its waters rush in torrents beneath the numerous bridges or merely trickle through its boulder-strewn bed, the Romolo has always something to tempt an artist independently of the picturesque old town spreading over the hill above it. A combination of felicitous circumstances has left this valley intact. Hotel promoters won't touch it, as it commands no view of the Mediterranean, modern villas don't disfigure it, owing to the difficulties of access, and the jerry builder finds it too far from the centre of the town to tempt him to erect his hideous workmen's dwellings.

The sanctuary of S. Romolo is not far from the source of the stream and five miles from its mouth. To this many of the townsfolk flock on the 13th of October, the festival of the saint. He was a Bishop of Genoa of whom little is known save that he retired. late in life, to a cave in these mountains, where he died The chief interest we have in him is his name, which, in the course of ages, has been corrupted to San Remo. It is curious how the name of one of the Roman twins should have gradually been turned into that of the other. It was not, however, till the fourteenth century that the town was named after him. Ancient Matuta had been destroyed by the Lombards under Rotharis, rebuilt and then sacked again and again by the Saracens before its overlord, the Count of Ventimiglia, handed it over to the Archbishop of Genoa

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#### **EXCURSIONS FROM SAN REMO**

in 1038; the latter in his turn disposed of it to the families of Doria and Mari. But the first being Ghibelline while the other was Guelf, the lot of the people of Matuta was not a happy one. Weakened by continual strife between the opposing factions, the town became an easy prey to the rapacity of the Genoese Republic, to which it was finally annexed in 1361. In deference to its local saint, himself a Genoese, the name of Matuta fell into disuse and that of S. Romolo took its place.

A Benedictine convent which formerly stood near the shrine has been rebuilt and is at present occupied by a sisterhood, and an ugly church façade hides the entrance to the cave.

The climb up to Coldirodi is well worth anyone's while both for the view and the quaintness of the village. It is perched on the top of the Capo Nero, the promontory at the west end of the shallow bay of San Remo. The Knights of Rhodes who founded the village built a large Leper Hospital near it, and though that has disappeared its name still survives in the modern health resort, Ospedaletti, situated on the coast midway between San Remo and Bordighera. It is with no little surprise that we find in this hill-top village a large library and a more or less valuable collection of pictures. They were collected and bequeathed by the Abbé Rambaldi to Coldirodi, his native place, in 1865. The pictures are attributed to the masters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The regret is that in any of

the collections on either Riviera we find so few works pertaining to a local school.

Ospedaletti has little in itself to attract anyone beyond its sheltered position. It faces the south and is more protected from the cold winds than possibly any spot on the whole coast. Its name is interesting from its historical associations with the Knights Hospitallers; but it suggests painfully the state of health of those who now use its hospitality.

Bordighera, the next town in succession as we move on towards France, has many of the attractions of San Remo. From its position at the extreme point of the Capo S. Ampeglio it is more exposed than some of its neighbours; but has its compensation in being less relaxing. The abundance of sub-tropical trees which flourish here in an exceptional degree seems a proof that it suffers little from its exposure.

The old part of Bordighera which overlooks the hotels and villas on its western side is very similar to a fragment of old San Remo. This was the whole extent of the place to within forty years of this. It was first brought into notice by Dr. Ruffini, to whom we referred while speaking of his native town, Taggia. Most sojourners in Bordighera will have read his "Dr. Antonio," a novel which he wrote in English, and which was the cause of many of our countrymen coming here to enjoy the delights which he so graphically describes. He has done for this place what Cannes owes to Lord Brougham, Nice to Smollett, and Mentone to Bennet—

#### EXCURSIONS FROM SAN REMO

the invasion of the English—happily one free from the horrors we associate with those of an earlier date. The prosperity this has added to many a previous fishing village on this coast compensates in some degree for the loss of their picturesque simplicity.

Dr. Ruffini tells us of the arrival in these waters of an English man-of-war in 1812, which was anything but a pleasant surprise to the simple fisherfolk. were at that time more or less reconciled to the French occupation of their territory, and from an English manof-war they might then expect as many cannon balls as one now might drop sovereigns into the town. frigate was becalmed and within gun-shot the natives were incensed with the Commander of the shore battery for not opening fire, and it was not until they threatened to do it themselves that the Frenchman fired his first This was evidently not intended to be effective, nor did those on board the frigate take the least notice of it; but after more threats from the natives the commander fired in earnest, with the result that the ship's bowsprit was carried away.

They then observed a commotion on board and that the crew were lowering boats. Some felt it was time to move off; but to their surprise the boats instead of making for the shore were used to tow the becalmed frigate beyond the range of the guns of the fort. They were still more relieved when later on she sailed away.

During two months the people of Bordighera were inflated by a sense of victory and might still have

boasted of their defeat of an English fleet had not this frigate turned up again and accompanied this time by two others. They awaited no invitation to open fire on the fort, and having silenced it a hundred sailors and marines manned the boats and rowed to shore. A bloodless fight took place near the battery, after which the commander and his men were safely put under lock and key. The Sindic, a certain Signor Garibaldi, was put under arrest and conveyed to the frigate, where to his surprise no other punishment awaited him than a good lunch with enough wine to make him tipsy. He was then sent back with the keys to unlock the imprisoned Commander, and the three warships sailed away. "Thus ended," says Dr. Ruffini, "the war between Great Britain and Bordighera."

#### CHAPTER XXI

#### VENTIMIGLIA AND LA MORTOLA

THREE miles beyond palm-bedecked Bordighera we reach the frontier town of Ventimiglia. Most people are too much concerned with getting their luggage through the customs to give a thought to the picturesque and interesting town which stands on the hill overlooking the ugly railway station. The rush to get the luggage examined and to get it corded and sealed should the passenger be leaving France and entering Italy might be avoided by taking an earlier train to the frontier and continuing the journey by another later than the one in connection. By these means we can attend to the necessary formalities after the bulk of the passengers have left, and time enough is also available to see what Ventimiglia has to show.

Whether we come here from the fashionable resorts on the French side or whether we be on our way there from modernized San Remo we cannot help being struck by the old-world appearance of Ventimiglia. No attempts are made to induce foreigners to winter here, and the old town goes its own sleepy way as if the

Riviera had never been discovered by the hibernal tourists. The modern buildings which always crop up around a busy station we treat as if they didn't exist. The very thing which gives the town its chief beauty is what makes it unsuitable for a winter resort, and that is the broad valley of the Roya from which the town rises. The waters of this river, unlike most others on this coast, flow winter and summer; they keep the place cool during the hot months, but in winter the valley serves as a funnel for the snow-chilled winds from the north. We have only to stand on its many-arched bridge to look into the heart of the Ligurian Alps. It is a beautiful sight: each successive height crowned with a village or tower till we lose them in the blue mists that hang beneath the snowy peaks of the Col di Tenda.

Many historians maintain that Hannibal chose this route when he made his famous passage of the Alps. "We may consider this as certain," says Frederick F. Hamilton, "that at any rate *one* division of the Carthaginian army, if not Hannibal himself, passed by the valley of the Tenda."

There was a flourishing Roman station at Ventimiglia in the time of Augustus, from which period dates the ruined amphitheatre. The conspicuous ruin on the hill above the town is still called the Castel d' Appio, and is said to have been built by the Roman Consul Appius Claudius during the time of the Republic. The cathedral stands on the site of a temple of Juno and the church of S. Michael on one dedicated to Castor

### VENTIMIGLIA AND LA MORTOLA

and Pollux. They are both very early churches; but, spoilt like so many, they have been ruined by so-called improvements.

The early medieval history of the town is one long struggle against the rapacity of Genoa, to which it succumbed in 1239. After that it followed the fortunes and was subject to the vicissitudes of most of the towns we have mentioned. Some events which took place in the eighteenth century may be of interest to some of my readers. It may well be asked how the cutting off of an English sailor's ear by a Spaniard, in the Gulf of Florida, could affect the tranquillity of the coast of Liguria and Ventimiglia in particular. Everyone has heard of Jenkins' ear and how it led to England's going to war with Spain, as well as incurring the hostility of France. The story is too long to go into its details except such as refer to Ventimiglia. England's alliance with the King of Sardinia was the cause of a British fleet being ordered to blockade the ports of the Western Riviera so as to prevent Spain from advancing into Piedmont as well as to prevent the Genoese coast towns from provisioning the Spanish ships. Why these towns should have sympathized with Spain rather than with their Italian neighbours is hard to explain. But it is certain that stores were collected in them to help Spain's necessity. Admiral Mathews was informed that a vast quantity of straw and grain had been accumulated by Spanish agents in Ventimiglia; he therefore sent a message to the

Governor ordering him either to deliver these goods or see that they were destroyed, and on the Governor's refusal a detachment of blue-jackets and marines was landed. Although the Governor had refused to comply with Mathew's orders he appears to have made no opposition to the landing force, and after the latter had destroyed the stores the whole party were entertained at lunch at the Government house, where the health of his Majesty King George, coupled with that of the Doge of Genoa, was drunk with acclamation.

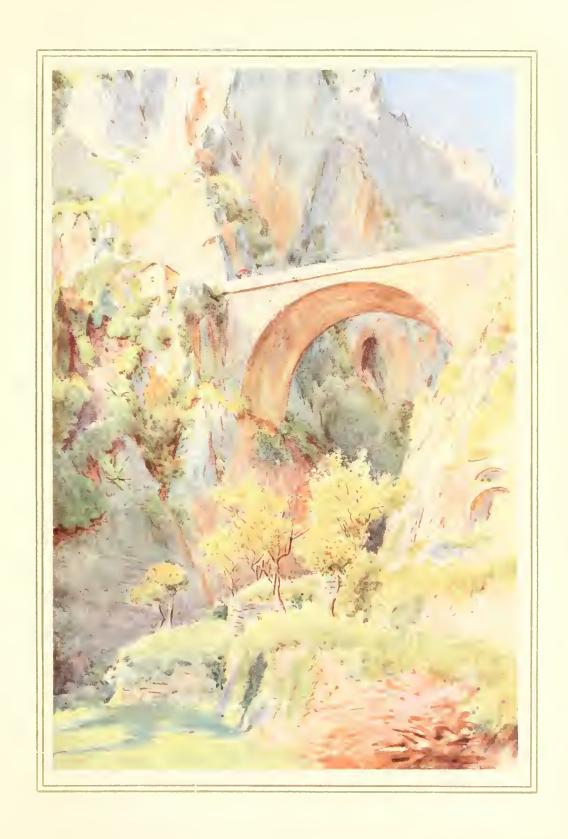
Frederick Fitzroy Hamilton, who gives us a long account of these operations, ends by saying:—"Such then are the details of this very unromantic and harmless operation, where no life was lost, where no gun was fired, but which local tradition, with the marvellous magnifying propensities peculiar to it all over the world, now refers to as a bombardment and a sack." This took place on the 31st of August, 1742.

Ventimiglia has only been the frontier town since 1860, when the province of Nice, with that of Savoy, was reluctantly handed over to France as the price demanded by Napoleon III. for his help to Italy in its struggles with Austria. The actual frontier is four miles west of the town. When we cross the Pont S. Louis we step into what is politically France, and until we reach Nice we observe a French veneer in the intermediate towns. But physically and ethnologically it is Italy until we leave Nice behind us. Mentone

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#### VENTIMIGLIA AND LA MORTOLA

becomes Menton, Monte Carlo is changed to Monte Carle, Villa Franca to Villefranche, and so on till we hardly recognize the Italian Nizza in the present Nice. Except the last named we still keep to the Italian forms, and the Germans do so even in this case. The educated speak French, but the working-classes speak a patois very similar to that beyond the frontier. Official France is, however, felt at once as soon as we cross the Pont S. Louis; we also evidence the greater prosperity which France enjoys, whether it be in the upkeep of the roads, the dwellings, or the dress of the people.

The village we last see on Italian soil is La Mortola. We have met that sinister name before on the promontory of Portofino; its origin being most probably the same in both places. Sepulchral remains are still dug up in the gardens, by which the late Sir Thomas Hanbury has made this spot famous throughout the Two Rivieras, as well as the goal of everyone who takes a keen interest in horticulture. The railroad happily does not disfigure these beautiful gardens, as it runs through a tunnel beneath them. They are reached from Mentone by the Corniche road, and are only about two miles distant from the centre of that town. The public are admitted on Monday and Friday afternoons by simply writing their names in a visitors' book and giving a franc towards a local charity. was fortunate enough to have been shown over the house and gardens by Sir Thomas Hanbury during a former visit to Mentone.

The house was known as the Villa Orengo until Sir Thomas purchased it from that family who had bought it in 1620 from the last surviving member of the Lautari of Ventimiglia. The oldest part, now mostly hid by modern additions, dates from the latter part of the fourteenth century. Few villas are in a finer position, placed as it is on a promontory in the centre of the shallow bay with Cap Martin and the headland of Bordighera at the two extremities. On a rock foundation of sixty acres we find 4,500 different specimens of plants, many shrubs and trees growing here in the wildest luxuriance which at Kew would require every possible care and protection. La Mortola is not merely interesting as a botanical garden, but has been planned and laid out with considerable artistic knowledge. Its principal feature is the pergola, which curves round the slopes of the hill and leads the eye to the villa relieved against sea and sky and distant coast. The profusion of plants, flowering shrubs and specimen trees contrasts strangely with the bare rock which in places rises sheer from their midst.

Dr. Hugh Macmillan, who was intimately acquainted with these gardens, writes in his "Western Riviera:" "From Australia and China, from Japan and Africa, from North and South America and India, from every quarter of the globe whose climate is at all similar to that of this favoured spot, a vast variety of the most interesting and remarkable plants have been brought together with infinite labour and skill; and they impart

## VENTIMIGLIA AND LA MORTOLA

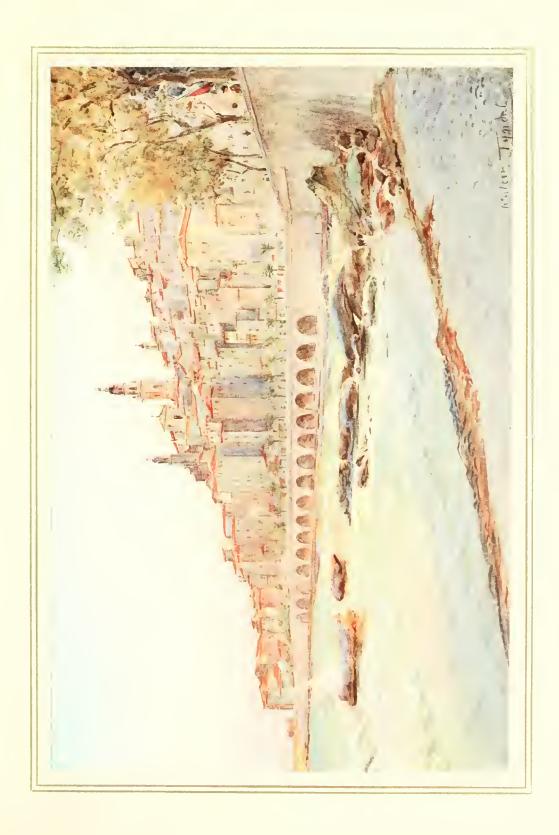
to the new home in which they are acclimatized an appearance so novel and curious that the first feeling in the mind of every visitor is one of absolute bewilder-Splendid date-palms grow side by side with lofty Australian acacias and eucalypti. The grandest agaves in Europe, with leaves seven feet in length, sending up huge green candelabra of hundreds of flowers for thirty feet, form a little forest beside the marble terrace of the house facing the sea. At the entrance gates large casuarinas, the she-oak of Australia, stand sentinel, with long drooping needle-like leaves presenting a superficial resemblance to some antique pine-trees, but when closely examined repeating the old-world pattern down to the minutest detail of the common equisetum, or horse-tail, of our own waste places. When the breeze blows through its pendulous branches it produces a peculiar low melancholy wail suggestive of the wild "corrobary," unlike the wind-drawn sound of any other tree. Enormous spindle-shaped heads or maces of blue echium-blossoms arrest the astonished visitor on the terraced walks. Broad-leaved cannas drink in the sunshine at every pore, and the grand foliage and huge dark crimson, strong-smelling spikes of the melianthus cast a deep shadow over the walks; while great leafless euphorbias rise up from the tangled mass of vegetation like church spires, and the arborescent composite kleinia unfolds its daisy-like blooms as luxuriously as on its native trachyte at Teneriffe."

With this description of La Mortola, written with a

tropical luxuriance suggestive of the subject, we take our leave of Italy and enter the French province of Nice, which but for Italy's necessity should have remained Italy still. It is a sad fatality that the price Italy paid to France for her assistance should have been Nice, the birthplace of Garibaldi, and Savoy, the home of Victor Emmanuel.



Mentone, from Garavan





#### CHAPTER XXII

#### MENTONE AND MONTE CARLO

HE mountains, which shelter the coast towns between the Italian frontier and Nice, are higher and bolder in outline than any we have so far seen. Yet in spite of this grander and more rugged setting these towns have a tame and prosaic appearance compared to those on the Italian coast. They are also much closer to each other than the latter; the last hotel or pension of one almost shoulders the first of its neighbour. Thus there is hardly a spot on the coast of the province of Nice where nature has not been subdued to man's requirements, and this, to all appearance, within memory of man.

The torrent of St. Louis, separating the two frontiers, receives near its mouth the refuse from an Italian podere, on the one side, while from its opposite bank rises the sustaining wall of a smartly kept villa garden. The humble podere probably belonged to the peasant, who struggled to keep himself and family on what this rough plot of land could produce, while the French villa may have been built by a speculative Swiss hotel-keeper

to let to a Hamburg merchant. The two banks of the stream are to a great extent characteristic of the French Côte d'Azur and the Italian Riviera. The one let or sold to the highest bidder; the other still inhabited by those who live chiefly by what they can raise on the hill-terraces or fish out of the Mediterranean. Doubtless the French have turned their beautiful coast to better pecuniary advantage than the Italians; but at the price of the picturesque and much of its former poetic charm.

We must go inland to find the hill-towns which still remind us of the past. A part of old Mentone still exists, but like an excrescence that has burst through the French veneer overlaying the lower portions now hardly distinguishable from the new town. If, however, we turn our backs on the four miles of hotels and villas which line the shore, and we walk up to Castillar or climb to that eagle's eyrie, Castillion, nothing is visible except a few French sign-boards to remind us that we are no more on Italian soil.

Although these brand new sea-side resorts make little appeal to me, I can quite understand the increasing popularity of Mentone. Few places short of Egypt are as free from the discomforts of winter. The north-west wind—the dreaded mistral of the Marseillais—which often sweeps down the streets of Cannes, and is unpleasantly felt at Nice, is cut off from Mentone by the range of Alps behind it, and can often be seen lashing the sea some miles off the coast while hardly a

ripple stirs the water close to the shore. The town is kept scrupulously clean, and is also well-planned, allowing the utmost number of its pasteboard-looking houses to overlook the sea. The huge hotels, though ugly in themselves, are in part hid by masses of evergreen trees, and their garden terraces are ablaze with flowers. The town council is also more alert in supplying entertainments for its winter guests than in similar resorts in Italy, and offers greater facilities for excursions to the interesting places in its hinterland. In short, Mentone is a bright and cheery-looking place, and is as favourably situated as any resort on the Riviera.

I put up at the "Turin," a comfortable hotel, where I had spent a couple of months on a previous visit. Its view of the sea being impeded by other buildings acts very favourably in the reduction of its terms, and as I prefer a north aspect while painting indoors my rooms rarely faced the sea while on the south coast. In fairness to the hotel I wish to state that nearly every room except my temporary studio faced due south, a matter of great importance to any who winter on this coast for the sake of their health.

The proximity of this hotel to the flower market was, however, its chief attraction during my former visit. The stalls laden every morning with freshly gathered anemones, ranunculi and carnations, with dew-bedecked clusters of roses, or with flaming masses of peonies, present a galaxy of colour all the more appreciable after a course of architectural studies in the sombre greyness

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of the old towns. Should we wish a harmony in shades of gold, we turn to the fruit stalls; here oranges and lemons, apples and pears have their rich colours set off by the more modest hues of the baskets and matting. The covered market is an ugly structure in itself, but it subdues the light sufficiently to bring the richness of the colour we see within the range of the pallet.

The crowds who assemble here to get the first choice of flowers, fruits or vegetables add to the picturesqueness of the scene, though they add greatly to the difficulties an artist has to contend with. While one's view is blocked out by a bargaining housewife one remains in an agony of suspense lest she should pick on a group of flowers just drawn in. Even if these be secured to the artist by purchase, someone may pick them up and throw them down in another place when told that they are not for sale. In some cases I ingratiated myself with the keeper of the opposite stall and would be allowed to paint that of her neighbour from where she usually sat, her baskets forming a barricade between me and the inquisitive people, from whom one is seldom free, and also preventing the danger of being told to move on so as not to cause an obstruction.

The stall-holders seemed pleased to have their goods painted, and when they heard that the drawings were to be exhibited in London they were anxious that their names should not be omitted. They were all very civil and tried to make it easy for me. But business is business, and if a customer should walk off with a bunch



### STYTEBA!

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of roses I had just begun, "Que voulez-vous?" and a shrug of the shoulders was all the consolation they could offer.

These drawings are now all dispersed. I was honoured by the one given as an illustration being purchased by Her Majesty the Queen, then Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales, and through her graciousness in lending it to me I am enabled to reproduce it in this book.

Though Mentone has been in existence since the early Middle Ages it has little that is reminiscent of its early history to show. It is known that its neighbour Roquebrune, as well as the towns of La Turbie and Eze, were held and fortified by the Saracens as far back as the ninth century; so it is presumable that Mentone was then also under their dominion. After the expulsion of the invaders by William, Viscount of Marseilles, and Gibalin Grimaldi, this district passed into the hands of the Lascaris, counts of Ventimiglia, and later became the property of the Genoese family of Vento. In 1346 the latter family sold it together with Roquebrune to Charles Grimaldi, the first Lord of Monaco, and as a part of that principality it remained until the French Revolution, when it was annexed to France. The intervening period presents the usual story of fights with their neighbours and faction riots to keep up the excitement while the neighbours kept quiet, and what may have been left of Mentone after these vicissitudes was completely destroyed by the Barbary corsairs during the course of the sixteenth century.

After the fall of Napoleon the principality of Monaco was restored to the Grimaldi family in 1814; but such were the exactions of Honoré V., the reigning prince, as well as those of his son and successor, Florestin I., that Roquebrune and Mentone rebelled and succeeded in forming a free state under the protection of the King of Sardinia. For twelve years these two dissimilar towns with the intervening strip of land were more or less an independent republic, and only became a part of France when Victor Emmanuel ceded Nice to that country in 1860. The Grimaldi, who still reign at Monaco, were compensated for their rights in this little Republic, which had seceded from them twelve years since, by the handsome sum of four million francs.

Dr. D. W. Samways, to whom I am indebted for these particulars, has given us a handy guide to Mentone which anyone intending to winter there, whether for his health or for pleasure, should not fail to get.

The distress of the inhabitants of the Principality of Monaco during the first half of the nineteenth century contrasts strangely with its present prosperity. I will quote what Dr. Samways tells us about it in his excellent little book:

"From 1815 to 1841 the Principality of Monaco—then including Monaco, Mentone and Roquebrune—was delivered up to the arbitrary and cruel extortions of its ruler, Honoré V. This prince lived constantly at Paris, and appears to have set foot three times only in his southern estates during the whole of his reign. In

the absence of modern facilities for distributing information he was able to pose in the north as somewhat of a philanthropist, whilst living on money obtained by the most refined and brutal extortions in the south. Honoré, who was not without ability, showed his interest in matters affecting the people by publishing an essay entitled, 'Poverty in France and its Cure,' and later on chose as the epitaph on his tomb, 'Ci gît qui voulut le bien'; but the philanthropy which always sacrifices others for oneself requires the devil for an apologist. If Honoré V. meant well his acts deserve the greater censure, for a blunderer is worse than a knave in high places, and to his epitaph might well be added, as a Mentonais suggested, 'Sans l'avoir jamais fait.''

We are then given the various means he and his agents employed for draining his subjects of every available penny. "By such a process of ingenious squeezing and oppression Honoré V. extorted an annual revenue of 320,000 francs from the small and humble population of five or six thousand persons then inhabiting his little territory." The hopes they may have had in the son and heir were soon dispelled. "When in 1841 Honoré died and was succeeded by Florestin I. the people were still subjected to the former 'philanthropic' oppressions, to which was now added the obligation of having all olives sold only by him."

The Mentonais seem prosperous enough at present, though how the people of Roquebrune make a living in and around their rock-bound village is hard to say.

But the money which now flows into the Principality of Monaco is the envy of all the neighbouring towns. God grant that they may find a more reputable way of filling their coffers!

The means used by Charles III. (the successor to Florestin) to enrich himself were even worse than those of his forefathers. Succeeding to a Principality in which every source of revenue had been dried through former exactions, this prince hit upon the idea of establishing a gaming-table in a room adjoining his palace. The inaccessibility of Monaco telling against its immediate success, he leased the concession to others; but it was not until 1863, when the gaming-tables at Homburg were closed, that this became a paying concern. M. Blanc saw the possibilities of Monaco being able to supply a want no more to be satisfied at Homburg; and being a man of energy and capital he made Charles' concessionaires the handsome offer of £,68,000 for their rights. On the acceptance of his terms he at once proceeded to float a company known as "La Société anonyme des Bains de Mer et Cercle des Etrangers à Monaco." Prospectuses were sent out on All Fools' Day, 1863, and in a short time 30,000 twenty-pound shares were bought up. One of the first to take shares in this "Bathing Establishment" was Cardinal Pecci, afterwards Pope Leo XIII. With this capital of £600,000 the now famous Casino was erected on the rocky promontory then known as Les Speluges, and since called Monte Carlo in honour of the

reigning prince. After the death of M. Blanc in 1881 it was resolved to double the capital, the bulk of the shares being taken up by the heirs of the promoter. The Casino was enlarged and its attractions were widely advertised; and such was the success of the venture that the shares rose almost immediately to ten times their original price.

In half a century Les Speluges, the rocks, which hardly furnished a bite for a famished goat, have become the most fashionable winter resort in Europe.

The concession to M. Blanc being only for fifty years the present Prince Albert was enabled to make almost any terms he liked for an extension. In 1898 the company after much bargaining agreed to a fresh lease, extending to 1947, which makes it liable to increasing rent till it reaches, in 1937, the enormous sum of £,100,000 per annum. Without wishing to enter into details as to the profits of this concern some idea of them may be gained by the sums it pays in what it calls publicité, in other words hush-money, to newspapers to suppress hostile criticism; in one year alone this amounted to f,40,000. Occasionally we hear of some poor creature who, after losing all he has, puts an end to himself; but never a word leaks out in any of the papers. A hurried inquest followed by a death-certificate of heart-failure, and all traces of the suicide disappear. The fear of exposure is so great that a player has only to complain that he has lost all he possesses, to be furnished by the company with the means to return to

his home or to any distance that he likes so that the further away he may blow his brains out the better. I met a German at Nice quite recently who told me that a friend of his had obtained a railway ticket back to his home in Germany by making a false statement that he had lost all his money at the tables; my informant then calmly stated that he intended making a similar application. "How are they to know whether I have lost or not?" was a question he asked, which I leave to him and his fellow sharpers to answer.

The demoralizing effect of the tables is seen everywhere, do what the authorities will to keep them in the background. Prostitutes and dissipated blackguards are welcome as long as they are well-dressed and spend their winnings in the place; while I have seen a respectable-looking clergyman refused entrance to the Casino because his boots were not sufficiently blacked. Possibly he only wished, as I did, to witness the play and take no part in it. I can assure him that it is neither a pleasant nor an elevating sight. A modern Dante could alone describe adequately the look of selfish greed of the babitué or the hopeless expression of the poor fools who spend their days taking note of the winning numbers so as to work out a "system." By what system can any sane person expect to win in a game in which every stake has odds in favour of the The odds, roughly 1.66 per cent., against him are not high, I admit; but where the stakes follow in rapid succession the accumulation of these odds is bound

to tell against the player. Mr. Baring-Gould, in his book on the Riviera, puts the case very concisely:

"If you go into the stock-market and buy the first stock your eye happens to catch on the list you at least stand an even chance of its going up and down, while your brokerage and stamp charges will not amount to the 1.66 per cent. charged as brokerage by the Casino; whereas in the stock-market the action will be comparatively slow at Monte Carlo the brokerage charge is approximately 1.66 per minute. If fifty coups are played per hour it means that as brokerage the bank each hour absorbs 83 per cent. of all the money staked for one coup, while each day the bank takes for its commission for permitting you to play there about ten times the average amount staked on the table at any one time."

M. Blanc spoke truly when he pointed out to the shareholders: "Le rouge gagne quelquefois, le noir gagne quelquefois, le blanc toujours."

A friend described to me a scene he witnessed some years ago at these tables. During a crowded séance he and his fellow gamblers were surprised to see an old man of the lower middle class approach the table and with a trembling hand empty the gold pieces from a little sack he carried on to the red. The croupier spun the roulette, calling his monotonous "Faites votre jeu, messieurs"; then as the pellet ceased to circle round, his "Rien ne va plus" heralded the fatal moment when the pellet finds its resting-place. No sooner had it

stopped in a black partition than the old man reached forward and grabbed up his stake, calling out, "C'est la dot de ma fille! C'est la dot de ma fille!" Several assistants seized hold of him and tried to make him give up the money he had lost. His piteous cries to spare his daughter's dowry moved the other players, who with a generosity, at the expense of the tables, insisted on the old man being allowed to depart with his money. Rather than provoke a scandal the management thought it as well to see him and his little sack safely off the premises.

Much has been written by disappointed players to try and prove that by cheating and trickery the company are enabled to pay their huge dividends. Their proofs are as futile as the "systems" we continually hear discussed. Why should they cheat and risk the exposure which one of their many officials might easily be bribed to make? With the odds in their favour on a rapid turnover they can calculate on an enormous annual profit without taking the risks which any trickery would entail.

To foul their nest as little as possible no subjects of the Prince are allowed to enter the Casino, and this also applies to any known residents in the neighbouring towns. I have heard no complaints on that score; the attraction of the tables brings too much custom to the hotel-keepers and tradesmen for them to raise any objections to their being prevented from losing their money. Besides this the subjects of

the Prince pay no rates or taxes, these being all defrayed by the company.

The Casino was designed by Garnies, the architect of the Paris Opera House; no money has been spared on its lavish decoration; the gorgeousness of its spacious halls fills the bourgeois mind with awe. But what is the result? The same as in every case where lavish expenditure exceeds good taste and only accentuates its vulgarity. I was glad to get out of the place after my first and only visit, and, although I did not play, a horrible fascination held me there. I felt like a disembodied spirit amongst the lost souls in the Inferno. The men who sat round the tables expressed no sign of happiness when they won, and only a look of hatred when they lost, nor did a smile lighten the painted faces of the women; a covetous glance at one more favoured by chance than they, would occasionally break for a moment the spell the roulette had cast on them all. Many who stood and watched the proceedings with an amused interest at first gradually fell under the spell; a five-franc piece jauntily thrown on to the green cloth was soon followed by others. The losers would risk a second on the chance of recovering the first, and in some cases they would leave after the limit they had set to their possible losses had been reached. These were only partially under the spell, and there was hope that their comparatively trifling losses would release them from it when the fresh air and more wholesome entertainments had done their work. The beginner

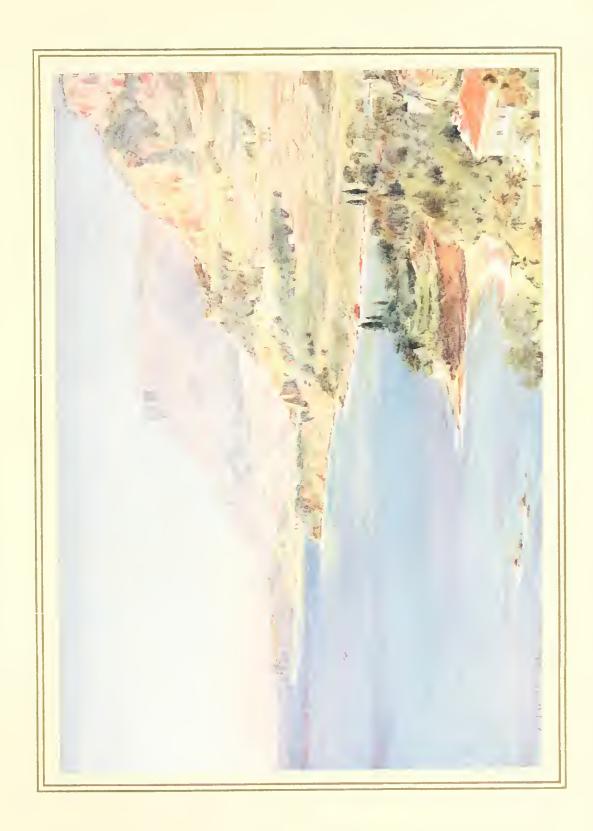
who wins is in a more hopeless condition; he feels that he ought to back his luck, and should he unfortunately leave the rooms considerably richer than when he entered his reappearance is almost a certainty. Until he has lost all he won on the first day, and considerably more, the goddess of chance has him well under her spell.

Besides these calamities the winner is liable to become a bore. Losers sometimes talk on other subjects—winners never. The golf bore is bad enough in some places; but if you wish to find the unadulterated article you will find him in any of the hotels within easy reach of Monte Carlo. The pity of it is that if these gambling hells must exist a spot with so much natural beauty should be defiled by the chief of them all.

The Principality of Monaco

### AN ANTEST OF THE STYLERA

The Principality of Monic-





### CHAPTER XXIII

### THE PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO

ONTE CARLO, lying within six miles of Mentone, with a good service of trains and tram-cars between the two places, its many attractions drew many there daily from the quieter town. Many and various were the excuses given for a run over to what was familiarly Monte: the band in the Casino gardens, a good programme for the concert hall, the Fine Arts exhibition, the pigeon-shooting, and now the flying contests and motor-boat races; in short nothing that attracts the idle rich is neglected by the "Société anonyme des Bains de Mer et Cercle des Etrangers." The bain de mer excuse was not to the fore at this season, the concert might be discussed after an afternoon's outing, and even on one occasion the picture gallery. But when these weak excuses were exhausted an indiscreet guest would start the ball rolling with "Well, what luck had you?" and if one sat up till the lights were turned out the chances of the game monopolized the conversation. This is worse in hotels patronized by others than the English. The guests at

the "Turin" were of all nationalities; the idle were in quantities, the rich were few. The extortionate charges of refreshments at Monte Carlo was a subject of talk amongst the few who did not go there solely to gamble. Those who spoke little or no French were the chief sufferers. To give one example:—I went there the same afternoon as two other Englishmen from this hotel who entered the Casino while I proceeded to Monaco. After winning or losing, as the case may be, they had some tea at the Restaurant de Paris. When they had each taken a cup and eaten a couple of small cakes the elder put down a five-franc piece and waited for the change. The waiter took this and asked the younger man for a similar sum, explaining that ten francs was the charge for what they had had. Handicapped as these men were by not speaking French, they allowed themselves to be robbed rather than kick up a row; and to add insult to injury the waiter pretended great indignation at not receiving a very adequate tip. On comparing our experiences when we met that evening mine failed to console my acquaintances. I had had exactly the same as they had, in a comfortable café frequented by the people of the place, and being probably taken for a Frenchman my charges amounted to less than a seventh part of theirs, and my proportionate tip was received with thanks. It is true that my café was less gorgeous than theirs, but it is no sacrifice to dispense with a gorgeousness not to one's taste. I have no doubt that the charges at this restaurant are not such as these

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Englishmen paid; the waiter probably pocketed more than half, and a complaint to the management might have ensured his dismissal. But where a whole Principality flourishes on the spoils of the foreigner one must not expect a high class of morality in its humbler subjects.

The old town of Monaco on its rocky promontory stands aloof from the gay and frivolous Monte Carlo. It has its castle (not a ruin in this case), its walls and its towers, as well as a large cathedral, and it is still inhabited by a scion of the House of Grimaldi which has ruled this territory for nearly a thousand years. With so much to recall its romantic past the town is singularly disappointing. Nowhere on the whole coast are the walls and gates as complete as here, in fact they look as if they had just been built. And this is probably the cause of the disappointment—medieval defences, unless they look old, are liable to look childish. They are too useless in the present day to justify their existence as new constructions: and renovated as these have been they make little appeal to the imagination. I have no doubt they look very much as they appeared in the thirteenth century when their existence was amply justified; but now the neatly restored drawbridge leaves us as cold as does its brand new portcullis. The castle is interesting from its still being used for its original purpose—that of a house for the reigning family—but it is neither a dignified nor a picturesque building. The large space in front serves as a drill-ground for the

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seventy soldiers that compose the Monegaste army; but at their best drill-grounds are ugly places.

There is a certain old-world dignity about the streets although they are not picturesque, and there is a sleepy look about the town which contrasts singularly with the gay Monte Carlo across the harbour. Monaco has one or two insignificant churches and a brand new cathedral. This is not designed by the architect of the Paris Opera House, nevertheless his masterpiece, the Casino, supplied the funds. Charles Lenormand designed the building, and a really fine building it is. Its style is Byzantine, and it seems to lack little that an architect well versed in that period could give it—that little is unfortunately its soul. It stirs no sense of devotion, but rather it starts us calculating the number of revolutions of the roulette necessary to defray the cost of the structure.

We never hear of the Prince of Monaco patronizing the Casino, the place being probably as loathsome to him as to the writer. He is a man of science who has largely increased our knowledge of the fauna of the Mediterranean and other seas. A palatial museum is one of the most conspicuous buildings on the promontory, and here are collected the specimens which he has gathered during his yachting and dredging expeditions.

It is said that his son and heir will refuse to renew the concession to the gaming establishment, but as this does not expire till 1947 he will be an old man before he loses that source of revenue. His mother was Lady Mary Victoria, daughter of the Duke of Hamilton and

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Brandon. His parents were married in 1869; but after eleven years, when the young prince was a boy of ten, they petitioned the Pope to dissolve the marriage. What valid reason induced His Holiness to accede to their wish we must leave to the Curia to explain. It was decreed that the union was no marriage, but at the same time the legitimacy of the son was to be recognized—more explanations wanted.

The Principality is eight square miles in area, and to house the 15,000 subjects as well as the foreign visitors nearly the whole area is covered with bricks and mortar. The valley between the town of Monaco and Monte Carlo is known as La Condamine, and here are most of the shops which supply the two places. Although we may not admire any individual building the view of the whole Principality as seen from a distance is extremely beautiful. We obtain this view from the Mentone side soon after we leave the Cap S. Martin behind us.

This, like any other extended view, is of course very much dependent on the conditions of the atmosphere for its beauty. Happily it looked its best early last Easter Monday when I set up my easel in a secluded garden off the lower Corniche Road. The peninsula of Monaco seemed afloat in liquid blue shot with green, a blue such as the Mediterranean often gives us later in the season, but which it reserves for rare occasions during the cooler weather. Above La Condamine and Monte Carlo the bold outline of La Tête de Chien was only a shade of darker opalescence than the sky, which

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as it reached the vault above us deepened to a blue rivalling that of the sea.

It was unusually hot for the time of year, which accounted in a measure for the evanescent appearance of objects at so short a distance. Not a ripple stirred the water and except the hum of the bees there was not a sound. Monte Carlo seemed to be sleeping off its Easter night's orgy, hours after the sun was high in the heavens.

A puff of smoke rising from a black speck in the blue waters and followed by a report was the first intimation that Monte Carlo had awakened. As by magic the whole scene changed. Dark objects shot out from behind the spit of Les Speluges, leaving a white line in their wake; then, turning sunwards, a glint of light on their polished surfaces made them distinguishable. They spun round a buoy, turned to dark objects once more, and were followed by others pursuing the same course, till the azure surface of the bay was lined in white concentric circles. My secluded spot was soon invaded by people rushing to get a good view of the International Motor-Boat race which had been so suddenly sprung on me. A dull roar beneath me and a volume of smoke between the trees further on was the first sign of a train bringing its load of spectators from the towns on the east. These followed at short intervals, while the road above me was in a cloud of dust from the hooting motor-cars making for the same goal.

### THE PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO

What had first disturbed the calm waters proved to be a trial run. The great event did not take place till midday. Clouds of dust were already discolouring my immediate foreground, my sea was cut up in white lines, and as if nature resented this unwonted disturbance her ethereal beauty faded into the commonplace. Her outlines became harder, and the mid-distant houses, at first a creamy mass of shimmering light, began to show their individual ugliness as they became more defined in the light and shade. The colour of the sky ceased to suggest pearls and opals and tended towards that of a blue band-box.

It was time to pack up, and hardly had I done so when we were startled by a roar overhead. A thing like a mammoth locust passed within a dozen yards above me. Those who directed it seemed like parasites gnawing the vitals of the ugly beast, and accounting for the terrific noise it made. I was thankful I had packed my drawing, for the droppings from such a monster, if not fatal to myself, might certainly have destroyed my work.

The midday gun not only started the races on the water, but must also have started one in the air. While the former was being cut up in concentric circles the air seemed alive with monoplanes, biplanes and hydroplanes, which seen at a distance during their evolutions had, I confess, some elements of beauty.

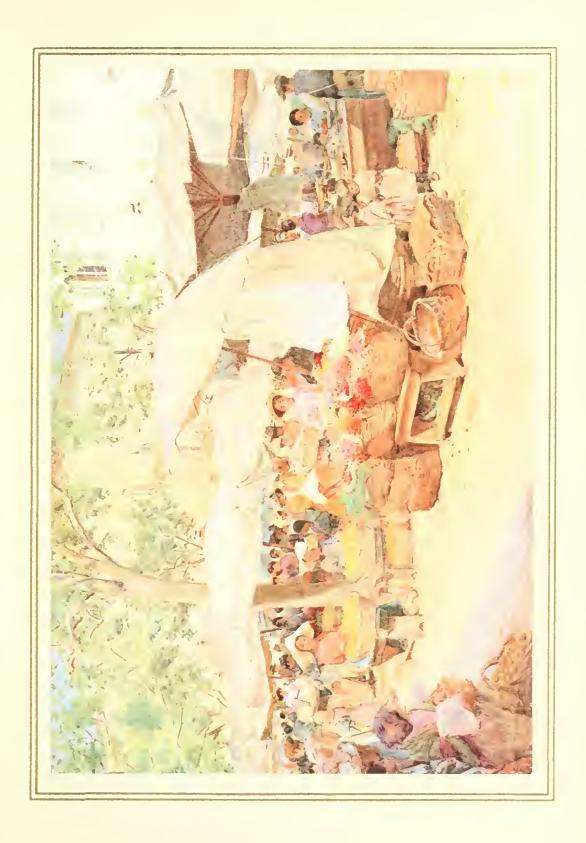
The following morning, although the view was fine, nature seemed not to have entirely got over her

resentment. The slight haze which had disguised the blemishes scratched by man on her face had disappeared, and the bold mountain shoulder, La Tête de Chien, looked less imposing in a light that showed up more of its detail. To complete a drawing when the effect which tempted its commencement has gone is the chief difficulty in landscape painting. Better far to complete it away from the changed face of nature while the effect is still fresh in one's memory. "Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien" aptly applies in similar cases. We will therefore leave to the mercy of the reproducers whatever of "the good" may have been preserved in this drawing.



# A SHEWLY OF THE REVIEWA

The Market at Nice





#### CHAPTER XXIV

NICE: THE HOTEL DES ETRANGERS, FRENCH COOKING, THE GENERAL ELECTIONS, THE MARKET-PLACE, AND THE UNRIVALLED EXCURSIONS INTO THE VALLONS OF NICE

HE half-century which has elapsed since the Italian Nizza (known to us and the French as Nice) was ceded to France has witnessed a more striking change in this town than in any other on the coast. Mentone may have grown proportionately larger, and Monte Carlo may attract ten times its former visitors; but Nice has done more than extend its borders—it has changed its character. Nice is no longer an Italian town with a French veneer, it might be a bit of Paris cut out and dumped on to the Mediterranean coast. It is only in the old town (at present a small quarter in a large modern city) that anything remains to recall its past ownership.

The season was drawing to its close when I arrived there last spring, and the cosmopolitan hotels were about to put up their shutters; there was, however, no fear of not getting accommodation in a French town with a population, independent of its visitors, of over

100,000 souls. I found a large old-fashioned hotel run by French people and for a French clientèle. It commanded no view of the sea, had no tennis-courts, and its garden was no more than what the three wings of the building enclosed. But should any of my readers wish to know of an hotel where good food and other modern requirements (except those mentioned above) are obtainable at a reasonable cost let me recommend the Hôtel des Etrangers at Nice. Its name seemed singularly inappropriate, for I heard no word but French spoken there. In season or out of season there is seldom place in its huge dining-room. a vacant Officials, officers quartered in the town, and bommes d'affaires formed the bulk of the guests.

The French as well as the Italians seem to take their meals much more seriously than we do and also to consume a good deal more. For one reason their meals are fewer than with us, and consequently their appetites are keener. To discuss the dishes is also a safe subject of conversation in countries where political feeling runs high; besides this the French know a great deal more about the preparation of food than we do. When a Frenchwoman criticizes a dish she probably knows exactly what is amiss with it, while her English sister may merely perceive that its taste is unpleasant. Our comparative indifference to the cooking may be due to our raw material being so much superior to most of it on the Continent. The cook is also a greater personage in a French household than with us; where

a chef is kept his wages will exceed the salary of the tutor, and in middle-class homes what the *bonne à tout faire* knows of cooking has in most cases been taught her by the lady of the house.

When a Frenchman tucks his napkin under his chin and wipes with the loose end his glass and cutlery it gives him a look of meaning business. By the time the fish is served we may with safety start a mild discussion as to whether it should have been fried in oil or butter. This may break the silence often observed until a previous course has satisfied the first cravings of appetite. Should the person addressed require another course before he loosens his tongue there is always someone willing to enlighten our ignorance on so vital a matter. As the appetites become subdued and the wine (still given gratis in the old-fashioned hotels) has produced its cheering effects we may hear how the various dishes are treated in the different parts of France. Outside that country cooking, according to most Frenchmen, does not exist.

More French people go beyond their borders than formerly, but it is still surprising how few they are. We were only twenty miles from the Italian frontier, and I doubt if one in ten assembled here had ever crossed it. The few who had done so did not seem in a hurry to repeat their experience; "la cuisine italienne" was not to their fancy; although they admitted that one or two dishes might to an advantage be introduced into France.

Few people seem aware that amongst the many arts which Italy has introduced into France the culinary art is one of them. Betore the time of Catherine de' Medici French cooking was as plain as that of the English. The Italians she brought in her train, as well as others who since her time have made France their home, introduced many dishes in common use in Italy, and France being the wealthier country, and having better raw material, has been able to develop to its present state of perfection what it has learnt from its Italian neighbours.

On hearing several of the guests asking for "la sauce anglaise," and seeing the old familiar product from Worcester passed down the table, I reminded my neighbours of the old saying: "England has a hundred and fifty religions and only one sauce," but that we might console ourselves seeing how popular our only sauce was. He told me that many imitations of it had been attempted in France, "mais il y a toujours un je ne sais quoi qui manque." I also heard "Sheddaire" asked for, and saw a piece of so-called Cheddar cheese sent back after a sniff at it with the comment that it was a Canadian imitation. It is singular that in a country where wine is so largely grown, and where it has been the drink of the people from time immemorial, that the French gourmet is much more indifferent to the wine he takes with his meals than most Englishmen. The petit vin included in the dinner was nothing to complain of; but a well-

to-do British tradesman would give his guests something better to drink with his boiled leg of mutton. And this wine was no poorer than most Frenchmen will give their guests as an accompaniment to an exquisitely prepared meal.

During my short stay at Nice France was in the throes of a general election, and, although conversation at the table d'hôte was lively enough towards the end of the meals, this election might have taken place in China from the little concern shown by I never heard it alluded to, and had it not the diners. been that my windows overlooked the town-hall I should probably not have been aware that anything unusual was happening. Beyond the election addresses of the candidates posted in reserved places outside the public buildings not a poster disfigured the town. This was not so a few years ago, when even statues were plastered over with every lie a candidate can invent to the disparagement of his opponents. A wise law has recently altered all this. Partisans may give vent to their feelings in the newspapers, which no law can compel us to read; but they may no more offend the eyes of the innocent with the hideous posters they still suffer from at home.

There was little in Nice itself, except its market-place, to tempt me to make a long stay. Its unrivalled seafrontage with its celebrated "Promenade des Anglais" is rather depressing after the season's visitors have left, a spell of hot weather having driven away the few still

remaining on my arrival. An interesting old town is, to my thinking, far pleasanter after the tourists have left, but where a town is principally laid out for their attraction the visitors form a part of the show.

There are few markets, especially in the south, which do not lend themselves to pictorial treatment; that of Nice is no better than many others, but quite good enough for many a subject. The people being used to seeing strangers sketching, as well as being naturally courteous, makes it more pleasant to work here than in most places. A large and ugly shed covers the main portion where the flowers are sold. It is the humbler stalls sheltered from the sun or rain by huge umbrellas which attracts us most. Where even these protections are not needed for many of the fruits and herbs the women, with the innate taste of the French, will guard their heads from the scorching rays by twisting a newspaper into a becoming sun-bonnet.

The fish-market further on is as picturesque in its way as the other. Highly coloured fruits of the sea are displayed here which are never seen in northern towns, queer-looking creatures we only associate with an aquarium are heaped amidst the mass of silvery slipperiness familiar in our fish-shops at home. The markets extend along the whole of the Cours Saleya, a half-mile in length, and running parallel to the Quai du Midi. It forms the base of an equilateral triangle comprising the old town, which is cut off from the new by the river Paillon, and hemmed in on the east by the

hill formerly crowned by the castle. The port is at the foot of the hill on the further side and lies snugly sheltered between it and the Mont Boron.

The harbour still retains its ancient name of Lympia; and before the Greeks built on the site of what we now know as the old town Lympia had been a settlement of Phocæan colonists. The Paillon at that period flowed into this harbour, but owing to the débris it brought down from the mountains these early settlers diverted its course to the western side of the Castle hill. We are told it is owing to a victory the Greek colonists won against the barbarian tribesmen that they gave the name of "Nike" to the town they built on the west side of their harbour. Thus we get our modern name of Nice.

The port is not particularly picturesque; if we wish to paint shipping in pretty surroundings we can find them at Villefranche, which lies at the head of the bay at the eastern foot of Mont Boron. Camogli was, however, too fresh in my memory for Villefranche to awaken much enthusiasm.

Cimiez is now a part of Nice, hotels and villas having been run up in the intervening space. When the province became Roman the consul and government officials built their villas on the hill to the north of the existing Nike; and what with the dwellings of their retainers, their amphitheatre and temples, Cemenelium, as it was then called, soon outgrew Nike, of which it had been a suburb. Nothing now remains of this

Roman town except some fragments of the amphitheatre, which traversed by a tram-line and surrounded by huge hotels is a pitiable object to look at.

After the destruction of both these towns by the Lombards in the sixth century the territory was annexed to the Frankish Kingdom of Arles, when a new town grew up around the castle on the hill separating the port from the old town. A few foundations are all we see at present of this feudal stronghold; and a cemetery and a public park occupy the crest of the hill where the medieval town formerly stood. The old fortress had withstood the assaults of the Saracens, had repelled the attacks of the Aragonese Counts of Provence; in 1419 it willingly put itself under the dominion of the house of Savoy, under which it enjoyed a short reign of peace, till the wars between France and the Empire again made it a bone of contention. The most famous episode is the siege of 1543; the Franco-Turkish fleets and a French army got possession of the town in spite of the heroism of its commander Monfort and his people, amongst whom Catherine Segurane, Jeanne Hachette Nicoise," chiefly distinguished herself. The castle held out until imperial reinforcements drove the French out of the town, but not before several quarters had been sacked and burnt. during the wars of Louis XIV. was Nice besieged, and when it yielded in 1706 to La Feuillade and the Duke of Berwick the latter caused the old castle to be razed to the ground.

There is little left to recall the various epochs in the story of Nice, and fine and handsome a town as it now assuredly is, a little of Nice, to my mind, goes a long way. From few places can we, however, make more interesting excursions, and none provide greater facilities for making them. That marvellous road constructed by Napoleon I., known as "La Grande Corniche," has been described too often to need any comments here on its beauty. What fascinating places do we not pass while we wind the folds of the mountain-side till we descend to the sea-level at Mentone! Eze, with its rocky seat detached from the blue Mediterranean, while its towers are outlined against the sky! Then the historic Turbia, whose houses shame the card-built palaces of Monte Carlo beneath it! And what of Roquebrune? Does it not look as enduring as the rocks from which it springs? But if we think of the stress which formerly drove these people to build on such inaccessible spots we may console ourselves that life is possibly pleasanter in the pasteboard houses we see as we enter the outskirts of Mentone.

The scenery is on a grander scale than beyond the Italian frontier. The villages are not less Italian in aspect, while their setting is more imposing. We are able to ascend much further up the valleys of the Maritime Alps than we can into the Ligurian mountains, both the roads and the accommodation being far superior. And what beauty and interest

does not the Vallons de Nice afford to those who can tear themselves away from the excitements of the town?

The Var, which discharges its turbid waters into the Bay of Angels, separates the Riviera di Ponente from the Côte d'Azur; and should my readers have followed me so far we may hope to meet again on the beautiful shores of Provence.

THE END







